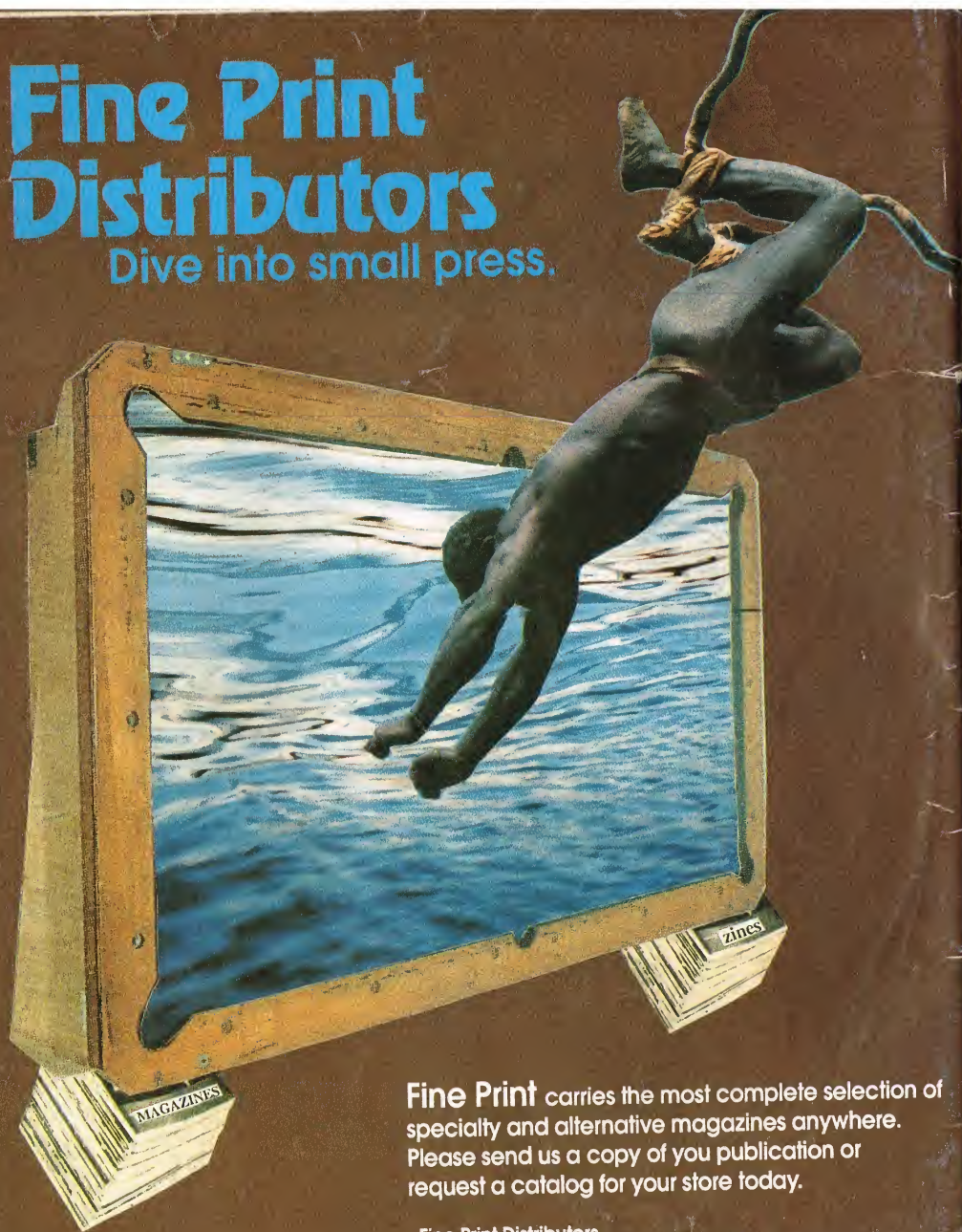


# Fine Print Distributors

Dive into small press.



Fine Print carries the most complete selection of specialty and alternative magazines anywhere. Please send us a copy of your publication or request a catalog for your store today.

Fine Print Distributors  
6448 HWY 290 East Suite B-104 Austin, TX 78723

Culture ♦ Community ♦ Critique  
Spring/Summer 1994

# Alternative REVIEWS

YOUR GUIDE BEYOND



INSIDE  
The New Shanghai  
Economic  
Rainforests of  
Pornography  
Rock'n'Roll is the

Zine & Magazine

Image by Johann Humm Bering



## INTRODUCTION

### Creating a Liberatory Press

W

elcome to the third issue of *Alternative Press Review*! Continuing with our quest to cover aspects of the alternative press not covered elsewhere, this issue includes a couple articles of note. Michelle Rau contributes the results of her personal investigation into the origins of zine culture in a breezy account titled "From APAs to Zines." If

you aren't familiar with the history of amateur publishing (and few are), this essay should be revealing. This issue also includes a piece on the Left Bank Books & Distribution projects in Seattle, providing a picture of how one successful alternative bookstore has



View from the back of Left Bank Books, located in downtown Seattle.

branched out, becoming central to the development of a handful of related cooperative projects. In future issues, we hope to continue providing new coverage of these types of themes and projects, including the history of women's publishing, as well as more detailed descriptions of important alternative publishers and distributors.

In compiling the selections for this issue that are reprinted from other alternative publications, I've been increasingly struck by the high quality of the writing and graphic expression from a wide range of magazines, as well as many tabloids and zines. While browsing through typical mainstream magazines, one can find an occasional article, however flawed, of exceptional interest, strength or unique perspective. Whereas many of the periodicals featured in these pages publish issues that maintain their high quality and strength all the way from cover to cover. And this is often without any dilution by excessive advertising (often without *any* advertising at all). Pick up any of the periodicals

featured in this issue, and you won't find any filler or fluff. There aren't any obvious attempts to attract advertising dollars through editorial pandering and no compromises to avoid offending those advertisers (if any) already on board. These types of alternative publications provide the best examples of what a genuinely free press could be like, if we can ever manage to create a free enough society where a truly free press could exist.

Articles from important alternative magazines featured in this issue of APR include Noam Chomsky's razor sharp account of the predictable effects of NAFTA and GATT on the workers of the world, Wade

Davis' wide-eyed description of the wondrous Amazonian forests that are disappearing all too rapidly under the pressures of counterproductive economic "development," Sunfrog's unabashedly utopian perspective on the relationship of pornography and pleasure, Tom Frank's scathing indictment of the new popularity of "alternative rock" as one more commodified product successfully hyped and sold by the culture industry, and Arch Stanton's exposé of attempts by a self-appointed group of modern shamans to interpret and control use of the latest psychoactive drug to catch the popular imagination.

You simply won't find articles this penetrating in the mainstream press. There the emphasis is always on the defense of capital, state and the "American Way"...of buying, selling and exploiting the world's resources. The only potentially liberatory press is the alternative press. Let's translate that potential into a creative new reality.

Jason McQuinn, Editor

## ALTERNATIVE PRESS REVIEW

# CONTENTS

### Your Guide Beyond the Mainstream

#### DEPARTMENTS

- 4 ALTERNATIVE DIRECTIONS
- 6 LETTERS
- 10 FROM APA TO ZINES
- 14 THE LEFT BANK COLLECTIVE

#### SELECTIONS

- 21 REVOLUTIONARY POLITICS  
(*The Rebel's New Clothes*)
- 24 THE PLO/ISRAELI TREATY:  
Another Defeat for the  
Palestinians (*Fifth Estate*)
- 26 PLAY ME:  
Girly Just Wanna Have?  
(*Bust*)
- 28 A WOMAN'S TRUE STORY:  
Of an Herbal Self-Abortion  
(*Choosing Choice*)
- 30 THE FEMINIST MISTAKE:  
A Response to *The Morning  
After* (*In These Times*)
- 32 THE CLOWNS:  
Running Amok in Los Angeles  
(*Shit Happy*)
- 34 REDEFINING THE RADICAL:  
PC as Media Scare  
(*Here and Now*)

#### REVIEWS

- 69 ALTERNATIVE PRESS  
MAGAZINES & ZINES
- 82 FEATURE BOOK REVIEW:  
*Gone To Croatia*



Mark Neville

- 37 Time Bombs by Noam Chomsky  
Why the new global economy will trigger more explosions like Chiapas.  
Reprinted from *In These Times*
- 40 Forests of the Milk River by Wade Davis  
Some thoughts on biodiversity in the Amazon Basin.  
Excerpted from *Wild Earth*
- 48 Pornography and Pleasure by Sunfrog  
Beyond capital, beyond patriarchy, would pornography exist?  
Reprinted from the *Fifth Estate*
- 53 Alternative to What? by Tom Frank  
Rock'n'roll is the health of the state.  
Reprinted from *The Baffler*
- 63 The Political Economy of Ecstasy  
by Arch Stanton  
Who will win the battle for control of the meaning and use of  
the newest psychedelic to gain a mass following?  
Reprinted from *Here and Now*





## ALTERNATIVE PRESS Review

Volume 1, Number 3  
Spring/Summer 1994  
ISSN 1072-7299  
Press run: 8,500  
Printed in USA

PUBLISHED BY  
C.A.L. Press  
POB 1446  
Columbia, MO. 65205-1446

EDITOR  
Jason McQuinn

EDITORIAL ASSISTANCE  
A. Hacker  
Tad Kopley  
Cy Wren  
Mikell Zhan

CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS  
Freddie Baer, San Francisco  
Johann Humyn Being, San Francisco  
James Koehnline, Seattle  
Phillip Lollar, San Francisco  
Mark Neville, Fremont, CA

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS  
Michael William, Montréal  
John Zerzan, Eugene

CONTRIBUTORS THIS ISSUE  
George Bradford • Adam Bregman •  
Noam Chomsky • Claudia • Wade  
Davis • Patrick Dengate • Terry Everton  
• Tom Frank • Girl • E.B. Maple •  
Chuck Ouray • Tom Roberts • Jim  
Slergey • Peter Sinclair • Douglas  
Spencer • Arch Stanton • Sunfrog •  
Leora Tanenbaum • Tom Tomorrow

The views expressed in the articles, graphics, letters, etc. published in *Alternative Press Review* do not necessarily reflect the views of C.A.L. Press, or those of the editorial & production staff.

Anticopyright—Original material published in *Alternative Press Review* may be reprinted at will for non-profit purposes, except in the case of individual articles, graphics and other contributions copyrighted by their creators or previous publishers, in which case all rights are reserved.

C.A.L. Press is a member of COSMEP, the International Association of Independent Publishers, POB 420703, San Francisco, CA 94142-0703.

"The whittling of time has its revenges."  
—B.A.G. Fuller

## Alternative Press Notes

**A**lternative Press Review #3 is here, with a new selection of exciting essays, art, comics and reviews! Every one of the zines and magazines excerpted in this issue, from *Bust* to *Shit Happy* to *Wild Earth*, is well worth checking out. We hope that the essays within these pages will lead many readers to take a closer look at the sources from which they were reprinted. The basis of a strong, critical and successful alternative press will be the development of a consistent and committed readership willing to support those publishers who are taking risks that violate the norms of mainstream media. Your subscriptions mean very little to slick commercial magazines whose only justification is to sell your purchasing power to advertisers. Within the alternative press, however, each subscription takes on a much greater importance, furthering publishers' ability to engage in critical communication that might otherwise never take place.

As of the upcoming Fall issue, *APR* will establish new publication dates: the Fall issue's publication date will be Sept. 30, the

Winter issue's will be Dec. 31, the Spring issue's will be March 31, and the Summer issue's will be June 30. In addition, submission deadlines will now be one month prior to publication dates, unless special arrangements have been made.

For regular (Third Class mail) subscribers concerned about whether you've missed their subscription copies, this means that you should probably receive your copies within a month after the publication date, assuming that print deadlines are not missed. First Class (and foreign airmail) subscribers should usually receive copies within a week after the publication dates. Foreign subscription copies sent by surface mail will obviously take much longer.

If you're thinking of subscribing or ordering back issues of *APR* this summer, please be aware that our response time may be quite prolonged due to summer travelling, especially during June and July. We should be back up to full speed, however, by the end of August.

For now, we hope you enjoy the reading within. And we'll look forward to meeting with you again this coming Fall! Take care.

—J. McQuinn

*Alternative Press Review* is an independent not-for-profit quarterly publication of C.A.L. Press.

### Subscriptions

Regular Subscriptions are \$16/year by third class mail and \$32/two years.  
First class subscriptions are \$22/year and \$44/two years.  
International subscriptions are \$24/year by surface mail and \$48/two years.  
International airmail subscriptions are \$32/year and \$64/two years

### Sample copies and back issues

Sample copies of the current issue or copies of back issues are available for \$4.50 each (\$5.00 each by first class mail).

Make your check or money order to: C.A.L. Press and send it to: POB 1446, Columbia, MO 65205-1446. All subscriptions are in U.S. dollars. Checks and money orders in other currencies must add the equivalent to US \$10 for conversion. Allow two to four weeks for first class and airmail delivery. Allow two to four months for third class delivery. Subscriptions are guaranteed. If you are not completely satisfied at any point the remainder of your subscription will be refunded on request. Please keep in mind that if you move to a new address, you need to notify us at least 6 weeks

before your address changes in order to help insure that copies mailed actually reach you. The post office does not forward magazines.

### Distribution

Bulk copies of *Alternative Press Review* are available for resale from several wholesale distributors. Contact us for a list of distributors, or information on ordering direct from the publisher.

### Submissions

Please enclose an adequate-sized self-addressed, stamped envelope with all articles, photos, and graphic art if you want it returned, or a 29c SASE if you want to receive a response. All other unsolicited submissions become the property of C.A.L. Press. We prefer that written submissions be typed and double-spaced; ASCII or Wordperfect format on 3.5" IBM compatible diskettes are encouraged.

*Alternative Press Review* may edit submissions for grammar and style, although we always try to keep any editing to an absolute minimum.

Please address all subscriptions, contributions, submissions and letters to:  
C.A.L. Press  
POB 1446  
Columbia, MO 65205-1446  
U.S.A.

## Boiled Angel

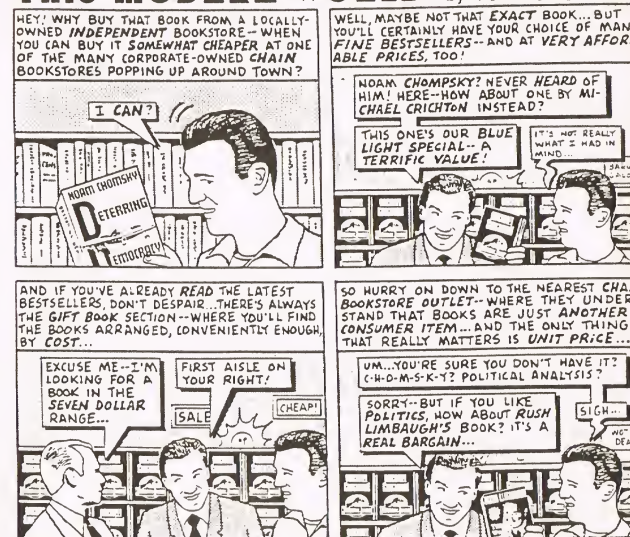
**T**wenty-four year-old Mike Diana is a criminal. He has been convicted by the state of Florida of publication and distribution of lewd or obscene material. The material in question was Mike's self-published xerox comic-zine, *Boiled Angel*.

Mike's style is a little extreme. His images of sadistic sex, drug use, murder, etc., etc., are hardcore and hilarious—and sure to offend the staid and stupid. Apparently some busybody complained about Diana's work a few years back—complained to the cops in Pinellas County, Florida. Dutifully, the arbiters of public morality set out to find copies of Mike's zine, and found them in a local comics shop. A few months later, he was being questioned as a serious suspect in the serial killings that were then occurring in Gainesville. Mike was shocked, but thankfully left alone—for the time being.

Last year, he received a summons from the Pinellas County Court to appear on the charges detailed above, and, after a whirlwind trial involving the predictably stupid bleatings of both prosecution and media, the testimonies of comic artist Peter Kuper and Factsheet Five publisher Seth Friedman, and an "execute Mike Diana" demo led by some grandmas outside, Mike was convicted. The District Attorney asked for two years in jail. Mike got three years probation, the conditions of which include: the payment of \$60 a month probation fee; \$100 a month payment on a \$3,000 fine; two monthly appointments with a state psychiatrist at \$100 a crack (and he must cooperate with the prescribed treatment, even if it involves drugging him up); several hundred hours of community service; he must hold a forty-hour a week job; he must attend (and pay for) a class on "ethics in journalism"; and, most outrageously, he cannot draw for three years—and the cops or his probation officer may enter his home at any time in order to make sure he's not doodling. Unbelievable but true.

It's typical that the type of liberals who would come out in open support of say, 2 Live Crew or Ice-T, or Jello Biafra even, have been nowhere present in this battle. It's up to us. He is appealing this conviction, and chances are that he'll win—eventually, but he needs support. The conditions of his probation were tailored to turn him into a zombified slave, toiling away as a convenience store clerk on the weekdays, doing his "community service" on the weekends, and his activities in his few off-hours monitored. Whether or not you've seen his stuff (or

## THIS MODERN WORLD by TOM TOMORROW



would consider it sicko death art if you did), it's up to us, his self-publishing peerage to come to his aid... before they come after us. Write him while you still can. Mike Diana, POB 5254, Largo, FL. 34649. (T.K.)

## Underground Press Conference

**T**he first annual Conference on the Underground Press is being organized at DePaul University by the Mary Kuntz Press (and other representatives of the literary small press) for Saturday and Sunday, August 19-20, 1994. Intended to gather "editors, publishers, writers and educators to discuss the crucial role of the underground press in a new era of 'zines, corporate links and interactive technology," it will include "seminars on the underground press as a force for change, diversity and experimentation." There will be opportunities for literature sales, a "read-in" and a Saturday Night Underground Ball. The organizers are looking for potential seminar presenters to suggest "How To," "Why," and "What" topics of interest to publishers, writers, book distributors, artists, editors and

educators and on issues of concern to underground thought and presses." For more information contact: Mary Kuntz Press, POB 476617, Chicago, IL 60647. Phone: 312-486-0685 Fax: 312-226-1168.

The alternative media conference, previously announced by the Alternative Press Center (POB 33109, Baltimore, MD 21218) for this summer at Johns Hopkins University, has been canceled due to financial difficulties. This conference was originally proposed "to inaugurate a discussion on the state of alternative media—its history, its relation to current trends in politics and society at large, and its future," a discussion which will hopefully be taken up instead at the Conference on the Underground Press in Chicago. (J.M.)

### A Note to Subscribers

Because this issue is late it is being published as a combined Spring/Summer issue. For subscription purposes it will be considered a single issue. We hope to return to a regular quarterly publication schedule with the Fall issue (Vol.1, No.4), which regular (Third Class) subscribers should receive some time in October.



### Letters are welcome!

As many letters to *Alternative Press Review*—concerning appropriate topics of potential interest to readers—will be published as is possible given the space limitations of our format. All letters should be no more than one typed, double-spaced page (no longer than 600 words). For anything of greater length, please query first to see if there is any chance we will be able to publish it. Letters will include the writer's name, city and state, province or country, unless otherwise requested.

### Obfuscatory article

Dear APR,

The inclusion of "Eco-Fascism" from *Turning The Tide* (in the Winter 1994 APR) is part of the relentless, ongoing campaign to smear all advocates of population limitation as racists and fascists. There is, of course, the obligatory, underhanded insinuation that Earth Firsters have a sympathetic ear for "racist arguments" and "the white supremacist milieu," something that anyone who has ever met any real Earth Firsters knows is patently false.

The highlight of this obfuscatory article comes when it ties an extreme-right racist, John Tanton, with the group Zero Population Growth. First of all,

I've been a supporter of ZPG for years, and I've never heard of Tanton. Secondly, the author of "Eco-Fascism" probably hasn't looked at anything ZPG has put out in at least 20 years. If s/he had, then they would know that Susan Weber, an eco-feminist and director of ZPG, has a very balanced, inclusive perspective, as do her co-workers. (You can write to them at 1400 16th St. NW, Washington, DC 20036, if you don't believe me.)

The principle objective of old-fashioned leftists everywhere seems to be to whip up hysteria against anyone who so much as mentions the word "overpopulation". This has always left me bewildered and angered, mainly because it seems impossible to me that any of the liberatory social changes leftists hope to bring about will have a chance in hell if human numbers worldwide keep doubling every 35 to 40 years. If this is extended into the foreseeable future (and there is every reason to believe it will), it is not hard to imagine a day when the absolute crush of people will make the limited freedom, mobility and justice we now experience seem almost like heaven by comparison. (Look at China, for pete's sake!)

The other thing that leaves

me awestruck is how so many otherwise intelligent people could miss the connection between population growth and consumer capitalism, between the growth in human numbers and the corresponding devouring of the Earth's ecosystems. Is there anyone out there who is seriously prepared to challenge me when I say: Multinational Consumerism absolutely adores and thrives upon ever increasing human numbers??

In my opinion, the best statement of this is still Vance Packard's *The Waste Makers*. It contains a brilliantly sarcastic chapter entitled, "Progress Through Proliferation of People."

"Babies...A Bonanza for Industry," crows U.S. News and World Report. The Engineering News Record opines: "New Population Score Card Can Help You Strike it Rich. The country's booming population growth spells money in the bank for the alert construction man. It means: More homebuilding; more roads; more commercial buildings; more factories; more transportation facilities."

"Every eleven seconds marketers have gained one new prospect who will need food, clothing, shelter, and later on toy pistols, motorcars, hi-fi sets, power-boats, mixers and a

casket." Another advertisement shows "the picture of a stork—symbolizing population growth. The caption reads: "This Bird Means Business."

This is, of course, just the tip of the iceberg, but it does give you the flavor. Are eco-anarchists in favor of more factories, roads, throw-away junk, *ad nauseam*? Of course not. Yet you try and explain this very simple phenomenon—that each new baby born will speed up the production of all these things—and most leftists give you a blank look like you just dropped in from outer space. Evidently, they have been brainwashed by the old authoritarian line, and taught to repeat over and over the words "racist," "fascist," "genocide," etc. as soon as the word "population" is uttered.

I find this very, very sad, but not just because their freedom of thought has been restricted in this very crucial area. It is unspeakably sad, because sooner or later, uncontrolled population growth is going to shut down the options for every single thing that anarchists or leftists have worked for.

Bill McCormick  
Charlottesville, VA

*It is true that some leftists have been guilty of overkill on the rhetoric front, for example,*

*in labelling relatively small-scale racist attacks inappropriately as acts of "genocide", etc. But in the case of the "Eco-Fascism" article which appeared in APR #2 you are way off base. It is quite dangerous to ignore the historical and continuing correlation between excessive and single-minded concern with "problems" of population (and immigration), and the racist and fascist socio-political currents which constantly seek to exploit latent social anxieties through decontextualizing and reifying such themes. Genuine social radicals of all stripes will remain extremely wary of any attempts to detach and isolate questions of population from consideration of the overall social situation. Anything less would mean surrendering a radical critique.*

*It should be obvious as well, that consumer capitalism will exploit whatever demographic situation exists for everything it is worth. To argue by analogy, just because some capitalists see environmentalism and so-called "green" products as a growth industry, does this mean that we should abandon an ecological perspective? Of course not.*  
-J. McQuinn

### Generational illusions

Hi APR folks,

The opinions and "in-depth analysis" expressed by Tom Frank and Keith White in the article "Twenty-Nothing" (APR, Winter 1994) speak for everyone between the ages of twenty and thirty. Or do they? The spectacle is reinforced by writers who not only present themselves as the representatives of millions of individuals, but who encourage others to limit themselves to contact with "members" of "our generation." What better way to ensure the survival of the status quo than to pretend that a twenty-year-old anarchist has more in common with a twenty-year-old Persian Gulf warrior or Operation Rescue cultist

than with a forty-year-old anarchist?

I think that those who identify themselves as members of a generation fear stating their ideas as individuals. It is a refusal to recognize people subjectively as individuals, and a reliance upon the "objective" statistical assumptions of the specialists and experts of the ruling class. This is what sells. If people can be fooled into believing in the illusions of generational cohesion while disregarding individual differences, they can probably be manipulated into believing that other people can define their lives for them.

There are plenty of twenty-something corporate true believers in business as usual.

How about printing an article by Adam Bregman (Shit Happy). Great stuff! Thanks to all!  
Cheryl Gilbert  
Mill Valley, CA

### Unholy agenda

Dear APR,

Daniel Brandt's article "Clinton, Quigley and Conspiracy," did an excellent job of placing Clinton within the context of the power elite. His observation of how Clinton's anti-war activity fit in with the establishment "liberals'" belated decision to end the Indochina war because it was too costly (in many ways) explains several pro-military positions now that he is president. These include continuing Bush's Somalia incursion, willingness to use force in Bosnia, approval of the snuffing out of the Branch Davidians, and most particularly the gratuitous missile strike on Baghdad which killed several innocent civilians. The military state never has to say it's sorry, even while maintaining Christian pretensions. (This is not a criticism of Christianity but of its usurpation for political ends, as will be indicated in what follows.)

lows.)

One major flaw is Brandt's sanguine view of Pat Robertson's *The New World Order*, calling it a "popularized yet articulate presentation of recent American history as controlled by (the power elite)." First of all, the book is far from articulate. It is a sometimes redundant mish-mash of hoary hoaxes (the Illuminati, anti-Masonry), slanders, historic lies, whitewashing of fascist tyrants, New Age bashing, and covert anti-Semitism, among other things. It is a perfect example of the paranoid style. Brandt observed that Robertson "couches his theories in a Biblical context" but quickly dismissed this factor. It is interesting that right wing bigots flaunt their Christianity but use the Jewish Old Testament as a bludgeon in what they call "spiritual warfare." Robertson's book gave a run-down on all 10 Commandments, after having broken the one on slander repeatedly. There was repeated mention of "the God of Jacob" but nothing about Jesus. In short, Robertson's religion is a facade which seeks to put a pious front on reshaped right-wing extremism—most particularly Birchism.

Brandt said, "I consider him potentially closer to populism than to fascism." This ignores significant factors. Populism has been largely co-opted by the virulently anti-Semitic Liberty Lobby. Robertson identified with fascist dictators like Rios Montt and Somoza. He quoted as authorities the anti-Semitic Tory Nesta Webster and the Nazi agent George Sylvester Veirick. The final key to Robertson's essential fascism is the m.o. of his Christian Coalition. The scapegoating of an unpopular minority (in this case homosexuals) to rally a political constituency is straight out of Hitler's book, as is the "big lie" propaganda technique. Brandt downplayed the pres-

ence of anti-Semitism on the far right, but it has been imbedded in U.S. populism from the start and a virus which can break out at any time, especially when the economy gets really rough—something the far right looks forward to. The extreme right is busy lining up its scapegoats: Jews, aliens, homosexuals, feminists, liberals, leftists, humanists, pacifists, Greens, New Agers, Pagans, environmentalists.... When their conspiracy theories happen to agree with ours in certain details it is a hook to snare the unwary for an unholy agenda.

Further evidence of unholy elements in Pat Robertson's bid for power is being sought for a work in progress by Free People Research Project, 10547 State Hwy 110 N, Tyler, TX 75704-9537.  
Free People  
Tyler, TX

### Deliberate distortion

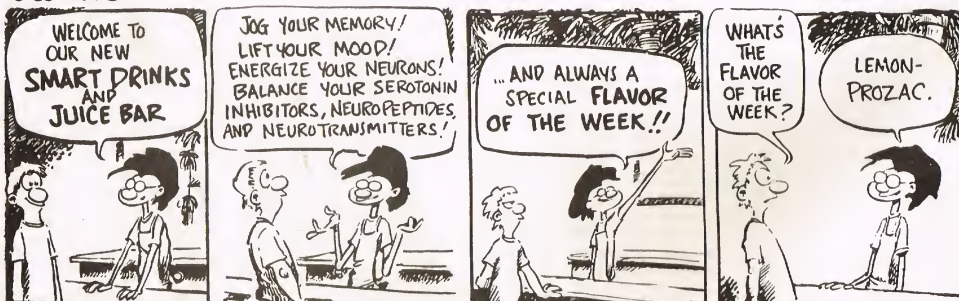
Jason McQuinn,

I read your letter from Matt Love, "The Ritual Abuse Line" [see APR #2, p.7], with disbelief. After nipping at feminists and fundamentalist Christians for "propagating" allegations of abuse—as if they have no basis in fact—he claims "it's very hard to get anything skeptical about ritual abuse into the local press."

Exactly the opposite is true, and I take Love's statement to be a deliberate distortion. Publishers and editors across the political spectrum are leary of libel suits. They are seldom willing to investigate or even confront ritual abuse for fear of litigation, which is taken very seriously and quietly filters out valid reporting.

On the other hand, an article skeptical of ritual abuse is risk-free. The public thus reads only one side of the issue, the "hysteria" thesis. This school is dominated by disingenuous writers like "ritual abuse experts" Paul and Shirley

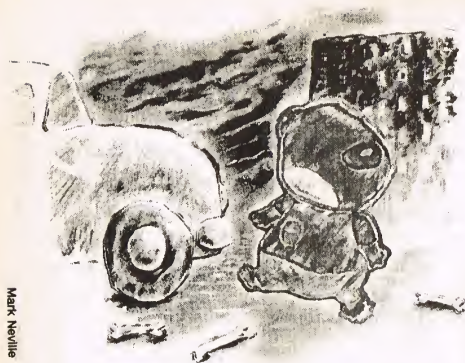
Alex's



©1993 Peter Sinclair

By Peter Sinclair





MARK NEVILLE

Eberle, who published underground pornography for pedophiles in the 1970s, featuring photos of children used sexually and smeared with excrement. They have written the *only* two books around on the McMartin case. Writers like myself—not a fundamentalist Christian—who have found *much* substance to the allegations, are ignored. The Eberles are read and believed by people like Matt Love, who reveals this much about himself in his letter to you: that he runs a vanity press publication called *The Whip*. What kind of bonafide is this for writing objectively about a form of child abuse that is often sado-masochistic?

And hasn't he noticed that liberals, or "PC whackos" as Love describes them, commonly share his disdain for any serious discussion of ritual abuse? Liberal publications almost always publish *only* the apologists. *Ms* is a rare exception. *The Nation* and *Village Voice*, creatures of the left, adhere to the "hysteria" argument. So do *The New Republic* and *L.A. Weekly*. And so, contrary to Love's self-pitying remarks, do virtually *all* corporate-owned newspapers.

Love's "mentor and model" on the subject is Debby Nathan, whose canon is built on highly-selective evidence

and outright fabrications. For instance, despite the fact that reputable archaeologists and a carbon-dating specialist have confirmed the *reality* of tunnels beneath the McMartin preschool, Nathan reported falsely that "none were ever found." The tunnels were discovered 30 days before her article appeared in the *Voice* (for June 12, 1990).

She recently quoted Rafael Martinez, a Dade County medical examiner, who says that in traditional Latin cultures, "it is common for females to kiss children all over the place—including the genitals."

I don't think Debby Nathan is a proper "mentor and model" for anyone. Mr. Love should lay down his *Whip* and try to find articles that aren't shallow apologies turned out by mean-spirited propagandists like Nathan. Good luck.

Regards,  
Alex Constantine  
Los Angeles, CA

#### Minimum work

Dear APR,

Well, your reviewer managed to trash just about every important figure in the small press movement in one page in your first issue. However, the stuff you reprinted from other folks is fine. If you continue to keep your own work to a minimum

we should get on well....

Peace,  
Billie Aul  
Albany, NY

#### No generational war

Dear Editors,

I can definitely identify with some of Frank and White's ideas in their article "Twenty-Nothing" (APR Winter 1994, or *The Baffler* #4). Although I, myself, am 32 years old, I also experienced my "decisive moment" through my involvement with "rock bands in the spirit of '77," and I also have experienced a cultural history for which there still is no accurate description in the mass media or the mainstream press. I, too, feel that my experiences while I was growing up have made me more skeptical, sometimes more cynical, and more isolated from our consumerist culture than most people who came of age in the "revolutionary" '60s could ever be. And I also believe that the liberal bourgeois struggle against "conservative repression," this war between Madonna and fundamentalist censors, or between the Republicans and our most affluent pseudo-artists, is about as real and revolutionary as a Pepsico-sponsored video....

Nonetheless, I was a little put off by these writers' slide into the misleading mindset of generational war. They were right to assert the fallacy of "generational categorizing," but they were wrong to fall into this tendency themselves. While it is true that some baby boomers have exhibited the greatest blindness and/or closed-mindedness to our peculiarly post-boom-generation struggles, it is wrong to assert the supposed social or intellectual superiority that "we" might have over "them." For one thing, there are many cultural or political subversives who came of age in the '60s—and in the '50s and in the '40s—from

whom we can learn a lot. Additionally, it is true that subversive or anarchistic movements were given more attention in the 1960s than they were at any other time in postwar history.

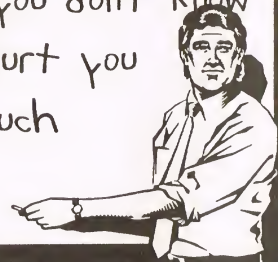
I know that it can be comforting when you are young to set yourself in opposition to your elders, so as to give yourself the illusion that your ideas are fresher and you know better than those people who came before you. But usually this illusion is at best only an ephemeral fantasy. I remember that when I was 16, and I was first listening to the Sex Pistols, Ramones, Dead Boys, X-Ray Spex, etc., I liked to think that I had something over all the "old hippies" and that there was some kind of new revolution being waged by "us" against "them." It was only a matter of months, however, before I learned that punk's cultural anarchism had roots in '60s situationism and '10s-'20s dadaism. And it was only a few months more until I learned that the new generation gap was mostly just a farce concocted by Malcolm McLaren and that we "punks" had more in common with those despised "old hippies" than we had with the vast majority of people within our own generation.

At present, I would much sooner ally myself with a 40 or 50-year-old who seeks some radical/constructive changes in our society than with any fellow 32-year-old whose views aren't known to me. We should welcome the efforts of most anyone (from *any* age group) who is still willing to struggle against all the sickness of late capitalist culture. Yet acts of generational war (the biggest mistake of the '60s, if you ask me) will do nothing in the end but create more youth-and-fashion consciousness for the giant, ever-numbing machine. Sincerely,  
Richard Singer  
Chicago, IL

## CHRISTIAN ANGST

Hey, Students...*Stay In School!* For your tuition dollars, you too can be exposed to *groundbreaking ideologies* by highly qualified *Teacher Assistants!*

what you don't know  
can't hurt you  
very much



Be sure to choose coursework that will enable you to enter a high-paying career and command the respect of your subordinates...such as *Elementary Education!*

Hey Mr. Boorfiddle...  
Do you mind if we call  
you Mr. Butthead from  
now on?

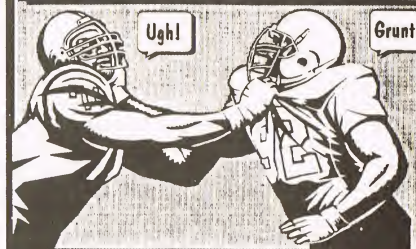


Having trouble finding that textbook required in your semi-decipherable course syllabus? *Not to worry!* Your good friends at the *University Bookstore* are there to cheerfully and affordably supply *all of your campus needs!*

Wow...Only six hundred dollars  
for three books! And to think I  
can sell these back for *twenty cents each* at the end of the semester!



Don't forget to support your school Football Team! Why, the few bucks you'll spend on a ticket will seem like a bargain in a few years when these semi-literate scholarship recipients become multi-million dollar professionals whom you'll be paying upwards of fifty bucks a seat to watch every Sunday to forget the fact that you now have a college degree and are still waiting tables!



© 1993 Terry Everton © New Vision Technologies Inc., All Rights Reserved



# Towards a History of Fanzine Publishing FROM APA TO ZINES

by Michelle Rau

Questions such as "What was the first fanzine?" are pointless. We might as well ask who really invented the wheel. I think that fanzine publishing, or amateur publishing, or small press, or independent publishing, or whatever we want to call it springs from a basic, ever-present human need: the desire to communicate. What form this communication takes, be it fanzine, amateur journal, or "virtual zine," depends on the specific conditions of our cultural environment, as well as on the individual doing the publishing.

This essay is an impressionistic overview of what I've learned about fanzine history. Information about fanzine publishing is concentrated in certain subject areas in certain time periods. But I believe the desire to communicate is constant, and I'm convinced that fanzine publishing wasn't limited to those subject areas and time periods.

It's been useful to conceptualize

self-publishing as invention or creation. Invention, it appears, springs from a mysterious and delicate relationship between an inventor (or inventors) and the cultural context surrounding her, him or them. The factors that influence fanzine publishing are many: Expectations of society, attitudes fostered by institutions, availability of equipment and materials, how the publisher interacts with different social collectives, political pressures, social class, connections with other creative people, religious beliefs, collectively held knowledge and styles of thinking, and tradition are only a few things which influence self-publishing. In many ways fanzine publishing is like parallel independent invention: isolated individuals across the country found themselves doing the same thing for the same reasons. Eventually, they found each other.

## Beginnings of Amateur Publishing

Amateur papers were published by boys and girls as early as 1812, but it was not until the close of the Civil War in 1865 that any considerable number were issued.<sup>1</sup> In the 1830s and 1840s, toy printing presses for children were available, and even more models were available in the late 1860s. They were considered ordinary playthings, even educational ones. The "rise of the middle class" gave children more spare time, pocket money, more education, and a longer adolescence. (Even today fanzine publishing seems to be a mostly middle-class undertaking.)

Amateur printers and journalists scavenged printing equipment from their fathers' newspapers, or made their own; sometimes they even competed with professional printers for small printing jobs such as business cards. Amateur puzzlers (puzzle-makers), illustrators, and engravers contributed to amateur journals.

Unfortunately, academics still persist in drawing artificial dichotomies between "work" and "play," and between "serious"

and "trivial," which precludes consideration of amateur journalism, or fanzine publishing, as "real" journalism. Consequently, amateur journalism isn't discussed in the "great man, great newspaper" journalism histories.

Organized amateur journalism seems to have begun in the late 1860s, though historical accounts differ. A directory issued in 1875 listed over 500 editors and authors, representing almost as many publications.<sup>2</sup> Prior to the formation of the National Amateur Press Association in 1876, regional associations abounded. The history of the NAPA, and of amateur journalism, is a picture of a lively, ever-changing community, complete with politics, splinter groups and factionalization, votes and officers, conferences, conventions and competitions. The amateur publishers, mostly boys, sometimes plagiarized from their favorite authors, like Oliver Optic, or wrote excruciatingly corny prose (by today's standards). Books of poetry and literature were published as well as journals.

Rival groups sometimes formed to compete for NAPA members' loyalties. There was also a short-lived Ladies' Amateur Press Association, and a "Negro APA," though both of these organizations are given little attention in the white men's histories.

It appears to be the NAPA which started the tradition of the "bundle" to cope with rising postage costs. Amateur journalists sent their journals to a central mailer, who collated and redistributed them. This seems to be the origin of the term "apa," for "amateur press association." In 1937, Donald Wollheim borrowed the idea and founded the Fantasy Amateur Press Association; the apa, he felt, was a solution to the labor-intensive problem of collecting, publishing, and redistributing fan information for small numbers of readers.<sup>3</sup> Nowadays apas go by other names as well: such as M2Ms (for "many-to-many") or group letters.

The NAPA, and amateur journalism, continued through the decades to the present

day. Annual conventions and elections are still held, and bundles are still collated and mailed. Poetry, folk philosophy, and memories are still published.

## Science Fiction Fandom

Some of the early amateur journalists were interested in "ghost stories" and "fantasy fiction." I suspect this is the beginning of the start of science fiction fandom.

The earliest fantasy bibliography found by Everett Bleiler, a bibliographer, was a listing of ghost and supernatural stories prepared by Miss Jean Hawkins, a librarian, in 1909.<sup>4</sup> While this wasn't a fanzine, it indicates an interest in fantasy and supernatural stories on the part of library patrons. It's possible that fantasy fans, exhausting the resources of their local libraries, turned to correspondence—and fanzines—to supply themselves with a continuing source of information about their favorite fiction form. In 1948 Bleiler acknowledged fanzines as a source—sometimes the only source—of bibliographic information: "Evaluations have been made of reference sources of a magazine or pamphlet nature, usually privately printed and available only to the aficionado, the specialist fantasy book collector."<sup>5</sup>

"Science fiction" has had many names—fantasy fiction, scientific fiction, and so on. It's not until the 1950s that the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* labels it "science fiction," which is one indication that mainstream editors and academics didn't take it too seriously.

Historians will of course differ on when, where and how science fiction fandom actually originated. (What's important to me is that it originated at all.) SF fandom is often said to have started in the "Discussions" (letters to the editor) column in *Amazing Stories*, published by Hugo Gernsback in the late 1920s (probably 1926). Fans discussed the science within the stories and the experimental biology, physics or chemistry upon which the stories were logically (or illogically) based.<sup>6</sup> More importantly, Gernsback printed letter writers' full names and addresses, allowing them to contact each other directly. The Science Correspondence Club (later the International Scientific Association) was founded in the late 1920s and issued the first fan magazine published by a club, *The Comet*, in 1930.<sup>7</sup> *The Comet* was renamed *Cosmology* for the second issue and lasted until 1933. Other fan groups and clubs soon followed, such as the Scienceeers, who

published *The Planet*. More fanzines followed too, including *The Time Traveller* (1932) and *Science Fiction Digest* (1932).<sup>8</sup> One writer said in 1973 that evidence had been discovered of over 3,000 titles published since the beginning of fandom.<sup>9</sup> (I like the idea of dividing fandom history into eras, called "numbered fandom." "Eofandom" covers fan activities prior to fan-recorded history. "First fandom" covers fan involvement prior to 1938, documented by evidence such as letters to the editor published in the pages of early fanzines.)

**"In many ways fanzine publishing is like parallel independent invention: isolated individuals across the country found themselves doing the same thing for the same reasons. Eventually, they found each other."**

Like amateur journalism, SF fandom has had its feuds, factionalization, rival organizations, conventions and competitions, literary awards (the Hugos), and contests. Like amateur journalism societies, organizations and publications were born and died, merged, split, and feuded. Subject areas and criticism changed to keep pace with technological, scientific, literary, and cultural developments, doubtless one of the reasons for its continued survival.

Star Trek zines are keeping pace with the times. I'm particularly intrigued by "K/S" (Kirk/Spock) "slash" zines, which contain poetry and fiction which extrapolate on the friendship between Captain Kirk and Mr. Spock. These "slash" zines provide a non-critical forum for beginning writers to publish their work; Star Trek characters, circumstances and plots permit a writer to continue stories without creating from scratch a cast of characters with consistent histories.

## Comics come on the Scene

Comics histories tell us that "comic books" as we know them began to be published in the 1930s. And the debate began: could comic books be used as a positive

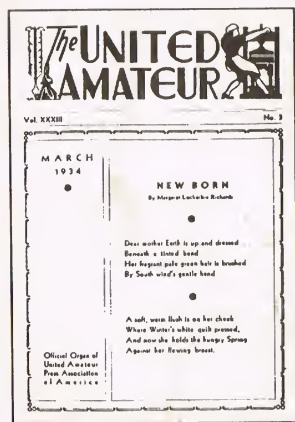
learning tool for youngsters, or did comics rot one's brain with superstition, black magic and gore? Horror, sleaze, and gore comics were suppressed courtesy Dr. Frederic Wertham and others at various times during the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. A censorship code was adopted by many publishers and enforced with economic pressure. (Fortunately, the code is gradually changing to reflect contemporary mores and values. It was modified once in the 1970s to reflect changing attitudes about drug use and relationships, and was modified once again sometime in the 1980s.)

I believe that intelligent, informed discussion of the comics forum in those dark years of comics censorship took place in fanzines; it certainly wasn't given much credit by "mainstream" America. Fanzine editors could feel free to discuss costumes, monsters, weaponry, possible plot twists, and real or imagined lives and pasts of favorite characters. They could also discuss aesthetics, philosophy, artistic and cultural significance. They still do. Today's small press comics circles constitute a "miniature world of cartooning," complete with artists, publishers, critics, distributors (such as Fandom House), advertisers, journals, and reviewers. Some artists are picked up by bigger publishing houses, while others opt to remain independent, just as some amateur journalists later made a career in newspapering, and some SF fan writers eventually became "pro."

## What about Other Genres?

So far, we have amateur journalism, beginning in the 1800s; science fiction fandom, beginning in the late 1920s; and comics fandom, beginning in the 1930s. All three genres, or subfandoms, continue today. But what about other kinds of fanzines? It seems logical that the desire to communicate, combined with diverse interests and available means of reproduction (such as mimeograph and hectograph machines) would result in a variety of fanzines on many topics. But references to other kinds of fanzine publishing from the 1920s through the early 1970s are rare. Perhaps this is indicative of how closely fanzine publishing was identified with the science fiction fan cult.

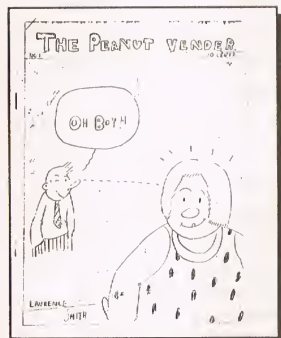
I can tell you what I do know: "eight-pagers," pornographic mini-comics, were published during the 1920s; I remember an illustration of same in a book on "Victorian pornography." The stock market collapsed on October 29, 1929. Could ordinary



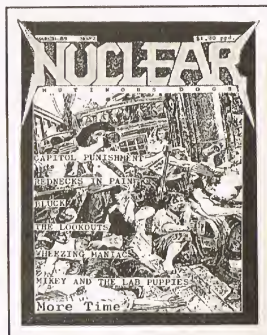
The United Amateur, publication of the United Amateur Press Association.



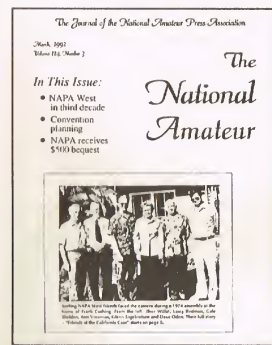
## Zine Origins



The Peanut Vender, a comics and humor zine from the 1930s.



Nuclear Mutinous Dogs, the skate punk zine from 1989 that originally got the author interested in zines.



The National Amateur, the continuing newsletter of the National Amateur Press Association.

people afford to publish a fanzine then? Did it remain a middle or upper-class hobby? I do know that some humor "magazines," some only dittoed joke sheets stapled together, provided some comic relief during those economically grim days. One such humor/joke zine was the *Peanut Vender*, which listed other amateur publishers of same.

Paper and ink rationing and scrap metal drives during World War II took a toll on small printing operations. NAPA member Daniel Graham tells us: "Many of the young printers were in the service and as their presses sat at home, well-meaning mothers jumped at the chance to get the old rusted machines out of their houses and into the scrap metal drive bins. This accounts for the lack of small hand presses that can be found today."<sup>10</sup> But technology marches on, and some NAPA members are selling their presses and buying Macintoshes and laser printers.

Mail art, of course, has strong links to the fanzine and music underground. In 1955, in the inaugural issue of *The Village Voice*, New York mail artist Ray Johnson is quoted as saying he has 200 people on his mailing list.<sup>11</sup> Held tells us that "throughout the fifties and sixties mail art, very much under the direct influence of Johnson, remained a closed mechanism of communication between artworld intelligentsia."<sup>12</sup> Is this where fanzine-like activity was located during the 1950s and 1960s?

Abstract Expressionism. Dada.

Situationism. Fluxus. Neoism. Futurism. Bob's Church of the Subgenius. Discordianism. Nouveau Realism. The Art Strike. Rubber stamp art. Movements, philosophies, aesthetics, and issues rooted in mail art and fanzine publishing. I think we are making a deeper footprint in the sand of the art world than we think.

**"Mail art...has strong links to the fanzine and music underground...Abstract Expressionism. Dada. Situationism. Fluxus. Neoism. Futurism. Bob's Church of the Subgenius. Discordianism. Nouveau Realism. The Art Strike. Rubber stamp art. Movements, philosophies, aesthetics, and issues rooted in mail art and fanzine publishing. I think we are making a deeper footprint in the sand of the art world than we think."**

The November 1959 issue of *Practical Mechanics* magazine (Australia) contains instructions for building one's own printing press. NAPA member John Setek, who brought this to my attention,<sup>13</sup> was intrigued above all by the idea that the *Practical Mechanics* editor believed that hobby printing was a pastime that Australians would like to engage in. Setek wondered how many homes took up that daring idea, and so do I.

Michael Cook's *Mystery Fanfare* is an annotated index of fifty-two different mystery and detective fanzines published from 1963 through 1981.<sup>14</sup> I take this to be evidence of the existence of fanzines other than science fiction and comics fanzines, published in the 1960s.

## The Underground Press

The "underground press" of "the '60s" was "aboveground" compared to fanzine publishing; it attracted attention because of "obscene" language or discussions of drug use, and because it was distributed more-or-less publicly. The underground press is given practically no press in many histories of the mainstream press. So it doesn't surprise me that histories of the underground press make only passing mention of publications that fit the description of zines:

"Hundreds of mimeographed publications have sprung up over the past twenty years to defend fetishism, fags, teeny boppers, scatology, sex, and radical politics. The historical point is that most of them fizzled out after a



The Big Takeover, a recently published rock'n'roll zine.

few harried issues or months while only the *Voice* and *The Realist* persisted until the youthful revolution arrived."<sup>15</sup>

The historical and cultural importance of zines is simply not acknowledged. Despite the thousands of fanzines (mostly SF zines?) published during the 1940s and 1950s, underground press historian Robert J. Glessing states categorically that "In the 1950s no [underground] papers existed and obscenity was considered to reside exclusively in a deprived, frustrated American underbelly."<sup>16</sup> (At least it survived somewhere.) Glessing makes the same mistake that the "great man, great newspaper" historians do: his short-term view of history emphasizes the longevity of the individual publication, not on the longevity of the phenomenon as a whole. Fanzine publishing is historically significant because many people have done it for many years.

Underground press histories do, however, explore the cultural, social, historical, and political contexts surrounding the development of the underground press. Some common themes emerge from the examination of reasons for publishing both fanzines and underground newspapers: rejection of mainstream media, reaction to declining individualism in American society, the commercialism and profiteering of the mainstream press, the search for community, and the construction of alternative value systems.

Photocopying or "xerox" technology was developed in the 1950s. It was put to commercial use in the 1960s. It was available to

the general public by the 1970s, just in time for punk music. The contrasty black and white graphics now possible suited the punk aesthetic—bleak, harsh, rude, polarized against straight society. Self-produced music was discussed, promoted, advertised in self-produced publications. Non-musicians found a way to participate—through fanzines. Bands gave interviews. Lyrics were put to paper. Political philosophies for music were expounded upon. Kind of like *Tiger Beat* with a really bad attitude.

Independent music fanzines constitute a large percentage of the fanzines published today. A breakdown of the October 1989 *Factsheet Five* (the major zine review magazine) mailing list showed that 18.7% of the fanzines received were music fanzines (the largest percentage). But we now have an infinite number of fanzines on an infinite number of subjects. Close behind were art, mail art, comics and collage: 17.9%. Third most common were simply "miscellaneous." 13.9%. Literary and poetry zines were fourth and fifth, respectively, at 10.9% and 6.8%. Science fiction zines came in seventh, with 3.7%. In other words, a large percentage of zines are too diverse to fit neatly into the *Factsheet Five* classification system (as well they should).

Nowadays there is a zine published for almost any interest one might have, no matter how specialized: alternative bowling (*Baby Split Bowling News*), Twin Peaks (*Coffee & Donuts*), women's sports & humor (*Girl Jock*), anarchism (*Dumpster Times*), or poetic lawn care (*Leaves of Grass*).<sup>17</sup>

This leads me to still more questions: has our increasingly complex society spawned increasingly specialized interests? Has the homogenization of mainstream media pushed us toward publishing specialized publications that do recognize our unique interests? Haven't we had diverse and unique interests all along? And haven't we been talking about them in fanzines, or alternative media, or even letters? Haven't we had the means to do so? If so, why haven't I found more historical evidence?

Of course media-zines devoted to grade-B or horror movies couldn't have existed before electricity or before the motion picture. Television predated *Star Trek* "slash" zines, and feminism predated feminist explorations of their meaning for women. "Starky and Hutch" predated Starky-and-Hutch media-zines. With computers, we have electronic, virtual and multimedia zines, and can look forward to still more forms. It will take a

**"Some common themes emerge from the examination of reasons for publishing both fanzines and underground newspapers: rejection of mainstream media, reaction to declining individualism in American society, the commercialism and profiteering of the mainstream press, the search for community, and the construction of alternative value systems."**

longer and more involved fanzine history—one that takes more fully into account cultural, political, and technological developments—to tie it all together.

## Notes

1. Nixon, John T., *History of the National Amateur Press Association* (Crowley, LA: by the author, *The Mirror Print*), 1900, p.5.
2. *Ibid.*, p.5.
3. Friend, Beverly Oberfeld, *The Science Fiction Fan Cult* (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern Univ.), 1975, p.19.
4. Bleiler, Everett F., ed., *The Checklist of Fantastic Literature: A Bibliography of Fantasy, Weird, and Science Fiction Books Published in the English Language*, (Chicago, IL: Shasta Publ.), 1948, p.ix.
5. *Ibid.*, p.ix.
6. Friend, p.9.
7. *Ibid.*, p.10.
8. *Ibid.*, p.10.
9. Bob (Wilson) Tucker, ed., *The Neo Fans Guide to Science Fiction Fandom*, 3rd ed., (August, 1973), p. 3, cited in Friend, p.10.
10. Daniel Graham, "Self-Publishing," in *Campagne No. 152* (July 1991): p.1.
11. John Held, Jr., "Eighties Mail Art Networking," in *Factsheet Five* No. 34 (1990): p.80.
12. *Ibid.*, p.80.
13. John Setek, *A Printer's Progress* No. 23 (September-October 1990).
14. Michael Cook, *Mystery Fanfare: A Composite Annotated Index to Mystery and Related Fanzines 1963-1981* (Bowling Green State University, OH: Popular Press), 1983.
15. Robert J. Glessing, *The Underground Press in America*, pp.15-16.
16. *Ibid.*, p.114.
17. Laurie Ouellette, "Notes From Underground," *Utne Reader* (November/December 1991): p.139.



## Alternative books and zines in Seattle THE LEFT BANK COLLECTIVE

Interview by  
Jason McQuinn

In late January several Left Bank Collective members took time out to talk for this APR interview. The Left Bank collective—originally organized to run the Left Bank Books store located at the Pike Place Market next to the downtown Seattle waterfront—celebrated its 20th anniversary in August, 1993. The collective's work is now spread out between the original downtown bookstore (selling new and used books), AKA Books (selling a wide selection of used books in the university district), Left Bank Distribution ("the largest provider of anarchist and independent radical books in North America"), and the Left Bank publishing project (with books including John Zerzan's *Elements of Refusal* and Raoul Vaneigem's *Revolution of Everyday Life*). In addition, Left Bank has been intimately involved in the creation and maintenance of a national Books To Prisoners project, and most recently with the opening of the Black Cat Cafe, a collectively-run vegetarian restaurant.

I spoke primarily with long-term collective members David Brown, Kent Jewell and Russell Puschak while I was in Seattle. Most of our discussions are included in the following pages. We began by talking about the Left Bank Distribution project, before moving on to discussion of the bookstores and other aspects of the collective.

**Russell Puschak:** "In the last year it's been very exciting to see a sort of mini-explosion of radical bookshops, or infoshops as they're now called, around the country...They're springing up all over now, which is really a great thing, and it hasn't happened for quite a few years, I guess. And we've been very interested in supporting these projects. In fact many of them have reported to us that we're the only book distributor that has given them credit in the United States at this time. We try to establish personal relationships with the people, get people to accept responsibility for the books, and then try to work out payment plans and help them. Because we know how difficult it is to develop an inventory with the price of books these days."



**David Brown:** "Since we have our own stores we know only too well what the other end of it's like."

**Russell:** "We also encourage people to start distribution networks."

**David:** "And publishing. I mean that's been the other end of it. You see so many small radical presses, with just a few titles and no way to get them out."

**Kent Jewell:** "And that can be seen in just the last few years, we've more than doubled the number of titles that we carry [in Left Bank Distribution]. And that doesn't include just books, but there's a great increase in the number of magazines and zines, and other things out there, too."

**Russell:** "Within the last year I can think of five or six bookshops or infoshops that have started up, which doesn't sound like a lot, but in terms of the radical book world, I think it's a significant amount."

**Kent:** "Especially considering what's happening in places like Britain, where the number has gone downward. At least in the U.S. it's

gone upward."

**Russell:** "I think our most crucial function is to serve as a supplier of books for these things that are just starting out, and to really try to assist them. We also provide them with the knowledge to develop an inventory system if they request it, how to pay people properly, how to get information out to other publishers, how to supplement what we see as a successful radical bookstore with used books, and perhaps not just remaining ideological in narrowly defining political books as books that are about politics, but that there's radical literature, there's radical magazines, there's radical fiction...all kinds of things that tie in. And I think the days where a bookstore could survive as a political bookstore are gone. Now it's very marginal. It's a very different kind of thing. You really can't. You have to provide a diverse list of reading materials for people."

**Kent:** "And in a sense we're lucky because a lot of these things we've learned, we've learned the hard way. Because we run a used bookstore, a new and used bookstore, and distribution. So we get to see a lot of differ-

ent angles to things and that helps us out with our distribution. You know, we can provide answers to people maybe better than other distributors, because we're also retail booksellers. So we realize what kind of tips and breaks you might need if you're just starting out."

**David:** "Yeah, or what kind of books, or what titles, because we know why books are selling out of our shops for specific reasons quite often. A lot of people are just starting up and need suggestions, or they're ordering things, they have no idea what they're doing exactly, and you can see it. They're just beginners. Clearly, you can tell them that ordering twenty copies of this pamphlet isn't a good idea, whereas you should try twenty copies of this one. Right now the Open Pamphlets are doing very well, whereas the other pamphlets...you just need a couple."

**Russell:** "One of the problems with distribution, and how people see distribution is basically, that we wouldn't be surviving if it wasn't for volunteer help at this time. Although some of us are paid, volunteer help is crucial. The workload is immense and it's very hard to survive distributing books and pamphlets. If we didn't have the assistance of the used bookstore at the same spot, it would be difficult to see if we'd be able to float by this time. And the assistance we've given to people is pretty much if they've asked. Or if we can, we've talked about developing some kind of material that we can hand out like 'How to organize your radical bookstore, or your shop. But we haven't yet done that, and it's pretty much just people writing letters or asking us, and we try to assist them that way. Also with some of the new bookstores that have started up we've assisted them by giving donations of books and materials, just sending a care package of radical stuff if we can, although I've found that as more and more of them start, we have less and less resources to be sending out care packages as frequently as we were before. But there definitely is a need and desire for this information to get out to people, and one other thing that is going on is tabling projects, too...Maybe eight to ten."

**David:** "Some of them are just hit and miss. They're one time. You know somebody's doing a conference and they say we'd like to carry a bunch of books. In fact we do tabling locally ourselves but you never know, it's erratic. You never know what's coming up. It's a situation that looks good for us, and also it's volunteer, so we have to have the energy to do it, and the people. But some-

times they come to us and say they'd like to have certain books and we supply them. We give them the books."

**Russell:** "BobbEE in Olympia has also just developed a relationship with a bookstore, which is something people can try if they're interested. If you see there's a bookstore that's an independent in your neighborhood or your city, and they don't carry the kind of books that you're interested in seeing there, what he has done is he's approached them and said, 'Look, I'll take responsibility for getting the books—ordering them, getting them in there—and you can sell them, I know they'll sell because there's a demand out there.' And a lot of times bookstores are skeptical. 'I never heard of T.A.Z. or all this kind of stuff.' And what he does is puts them on the shelf and he basically does it as a labor of love to get the books out, because he makes like 5 or 8% off of it. He just wrote us a letter, and he's been doing it for a year, and he's sold quite a few hundred dollars worth of books, but he's made \$40 total off of it. But it is a way to get books out there, and a way to get experience working in bookstores."

**Jason:** "What kind of help can you provide for zine, magazine and book publishers?"

**Russell:** "Well, actually, we've just made a few decisions within the last few months about zines, and alternative periodicals. In the past we've had enough trouble just maintaining books and keeping them in stock in inventory. Especially when a lot of our books come from England and it's quite difficult to figure out how to get them here and keep up with demand and that kind of thing. But we've decided in the last few months that we'd like to start carrying more self-produced, alternative zines. In the same respect we carry a lot of pamphlets that are small productions. And although we don't make much money on it, it's part of our commitment to keeping things out there that are affordable, and different, and interesting, etc."

**David:** "We've also done the same thing, you know, trying to provide aid to some of the small presses. Of, if somebody needs equipment, we've made donations financially. We've helped people buy equipment. And then also, like with bookstores, for example when Bound Together gets its windows knocked out, or gets trashed, over the years we've made some fairly substantial contributions to those things. So that helps other bookstores in the process. [Examples cited include helping out The Match! about a year ago with getting some printing equipment, and

the Fifth Estate with materials.] Mainly what we try to do rather than just floating money out there is we try to provide a very specific, concrete, tangible object, so that we know where and how the money's being used. It's like with the Black Cat [a new restaurant collective], you know. They needed some loans. What we tried to do is eyeball some specific equipment...an espresso machine, cash register."

**Kent:** "Back to zines. We've been carrying zines at our retail bookstores for years and years, and the number of those have increased. And we have been distributing zines, but as Russell said, we're carrying more now. And we'd like to encourage that growth. We see distributing them as an extra step above and beyond carrying them directly at the bookstore. And a lot of things that we've carried at the retail store we've liked carrying direct over the years, because it does give percentage-wise more money to the people who put them out. As opposed to dealing with some larger distributors which cuts down their percentage quite a bit."

**Russell:** "Even though we distribute periodicals, we also encourage people if they're starting up a bookstore to go direct to the publisher of the zine or periodical and that way it will help support the project cause then our 10% will not be taken out...since most things are such low-budget projects anyway. Part of the problem...we see with distributing alternative zines is getting the knowledge out to all of the bookstores that we are picking up zines and carrying them. And since many of them are dated material, or at least, dated in their cover and that kind of orientation, it takes awhile—numerous mailings—to alert people to the fact that you are carrying them. And most of them are so inexpensive, that if you're going to do distribution of real underground periodicals, it's mainly a labor of love. And we're interested in expanding that, but we're also interested in carrying things we personally like and see value in."

**David:** "There's really no money in this, either. And the other thing is that we really don't have any business with newsstands...So we just don't have a huge base, either. It mainly...makes it available to bookstores, or it lets people know it's available, maybe getting to individuals so they can pursue it after that."

**Russell:** "And one of the more exciting things is, for instance, we've been dealing with some people in South Africa who are running a bookstore under tremendous harassment from the government. But one of



## ALTERNATIVE MEDIA Radical Distribution



From left: Kent Jewell, Russell Puschak, Linda Wehnes and David Brown at AKA books.

the periodicals we're very happy to carry is one about the abuse of psychiatric survivors and victims...and it's called *Dendron*. And for us just being a small distributors, we were able to send ten copies into South Africa of that extremely obscure magazine. And they don't care if they get it six months late there, if it even goes through the censorship. And that's something that I see as really valuable, a valuable function of Left Bank."

David: "The ability to get things to far off places for people that want them. Not just to

get things on the newsstand and to get sales really quickly for the month that it's out. That's somebody else's function and we haven't oriented ourselves to that at all."

Jason: "Did the Left Bank collective get any help from other collectives when it started?"

David: "When Left Bank got started it did not have any help. This was what... '73. And it was mainly just a few individuals who loaned or provided the start-up money. Around '78 we started the publishing project and felt that we were doing one book. And felt that to help get that book distributed, it would help if we had other publishers as well so we could offer a number of titles. So we did distribution of, say, the Freedom Press titles, for example, from England, which were not getting well distributed in this country at all. There were a few small mail-order, direct-to-individual distributors, but there were no bookstores that could easily order titles that were being produced in England. So we picked up Freedom Press and a number of small pamphlet presses and a few other books. Around that same period of time in '79 or '80 we started the Books To Prisoners project. Although the bookstore had been providing books to prisoners all along for specific requests, we couldn't meet them all. So we started a specific organized project to provide books to prisoners free. And we got a very generous grant at that time to help it get going, a grant to provide mainly postage costs. Books and other things were being donated, and labor was donated. And then in '83-'84 we started AKA Books

as a used bookstore in conjunction with Left Bank."

David: "[I got involved in the project] in '78. I used to provide books on consignment much like BobEE Sweet does with that store [in Olympia]. In around '71 I started Mother Earth, mostly mailorder. And so when Left Bank started and when Red and Black [another Seattle bookstore collective] started I used to provide both stores with anarchist books on consignment, mainly because I was ordering that stuff from England. I'd order the Freedom titles, the Solidarity titles and I got all the pamphlets."

Russell: "Just as a side note for a collective history of Seattle, in the early years in the '60s and '70s there was a tremendous collective movement here with a collective auto shop and grocery—this is besides the cops—a flour mill, and all kinds of things like that. And at this point with the introduction of the newest collective, the Black Cat Cafe, which was started this past September, we're up to three collectives in Seattle and two of them are bookstores. There's the Red and Black, which Dave just mentioned, which has been around for twenty years, and Left Bank Books."

Kent: "And a side note on Seattle. We're lucky to be in Seattle because Seattle is such a diverse town with a lot of people with a lot of varied and intensive reading interests. And there's a lot of bookstores, and a lot of diversity of bookstores compared to most cities in the United States. We're definitely grateful for that. And we've got a great location. Our retail bookstore, Left Bank, is down in the Pike Place Public Market. We wouldn't want to be anywhere else in the city than there. It's a great spot."

Russell: "It's one of the very, very fortunate things that the people that started Left Bank Books had the foresight to not only go to one of the coolest parts of town where the Pike Place—the oldest continuously operating farmers' market—existed, and get a street-level storefront that's right there, and people can stumble on us from all over the world and pick up books that are almost not available in their communities at all. And that's been a really great thing. It's one of the reasons we've been able to survive and maintain the kind of bookstore that we've wanted. We haven't had to make many concessions to bestsellers at all, or any of the kind of books that we're not interested in. In fact it's given us the ability to have a tremendous backlog. And one of the things we really focus on is keeping backlog books—books that are maybe five years old—that



Books To Prisoners collective members filling requests at one of the weekly gatherings.

## Books To Prisoners Project

As the total number of prisoners in the United States approaches one million, the demand for literature in prisons is skyrocketing. In response, the Books To Prisoners Project, an all-volunteer, collectively-run distribution service, sends books free on request to incarcerated people in Washington state and across the U.S. But the project always needs help with its mission.

Books To Prisoners is one of only four groups performing this service nationwide. (Other programs exist in Philadelphia, Boston and San Francisco in the U.S., as well as in Vancouver, Canada.) Kris, who has been involved with the collective for six years, says that when she started the project received just under 50 letters a month. By December of last year the mail volume was already up to 500 requests per month and growing. Since all books distributed and all funds used are donated, there is clearly an increasing need for more books and monetary donations in order to provide a good selection of books to all those requesting them.

The Books To Prisoners collective is always looking for publishers, distributors and individuals willing to donate books. Any books, new or used, are accepted, though, according to collective members it's hardest to get current, up-to-date books. One collective member, Dan, emphasizes, "We get a lot of old books. The only law book we have is from 1975. It's really hard to get recent books." Steve, another collective member

who has been working on the project for five years now, emphasizes that: "We used to send out three books to everybody who wrote." Now the project needs to be more frugal with both books and postage.

The collective is eager to accept donations of zines and magazines as well. Any publishers with left over magazines or back issues, are welcome to send them to BTP for distribution. And, of course, the project is also looking for monetary donations to help offset postage costs. Even sending the books at the 69¢ per pound library rate, postage costs alone can easily approach \$300 per week.

Book and magazine donations are tax deductible. Occasionally, people have donated their entire book collections to the BTP project. Publisher Chaz Bufe and Pressure Drop Press have both donated large numbers of books. And the project regularly gets extra copies of the newsletter *Prison Legal News*.

The actual titles that are sent to prisoners are largely determined by the requests that are received for subject areas and types of books. Topping the list of requests, according to collective members, are dictionaries, books on black history, basic grammar, GED books, native American books, and books on philosophy, psychology and foreign languages, as well as anarchism and politics. One of the most requested single title is the ACLU's *Rights of Prisoners* book. And legal books in general are always in high demand.

Aram, who has been involved with BTP for

two years and who is writing a pamphlet about prison rape, says, "It would be cool to send info out that deals with sexism...We send out thousands of books to people who are rapists or who have been raped." And Kris adds, "Yeah, it would be nice to be able to send more books out to people about issues...rather than just sending novels."

Unfortunately, some prisons won't allow used books to be sent to inmates, and some prisons refuse all hardcover books. Another collective member, Lori, who has been working with BTP for three years, adds that "A lot of prisons won't let us send photocopies" either. And, of course, prison censorship can take many forms. The most censored zine so far has been the *Moorish Science Monitor*. Lori adds that, "Especially in a prison where we can't get any books to individual prisoners, we'll send them two or three boxes to their library, but we make them pay for the postage at least."

The project has been operating now for 13 years, since the early '80s. Like any other all-volunteer project the amount of work that gets done can vary with the number of people involved and their level of commitment. But right now, the project has an especially good, well-functioning collective that meets once a week.

**Books To Prisoners Project**  
Box A, 92 Pike Street  
Seattle, WA 98101  
(206) 324-8647



## Radical Distribution

you don't sell more than one copy a year of, but we find them to be valuable books. There's virtually no other bookstore in town—in Seattle, even being a booklover's town—that makes a commitment to backlist books like we do...."

**Jason:** "Was Left Bank successful from the beginning? Did it pay its bills?"

**David:** "When [Left Bank] first got started it was all volunteer. It paid the bills, but one of the founders, for example, who had the ability to provide money to buy books, over a period of years put several thousand dollars into the store, with the hope that he would get his money back eventually. Which he did, but it took about ten years. And the first four or five years there was no one paid. It was an all-volunteer staff. But again, the idea when the store was started was that eventually it would be able to support a small staff. To be able to provide better service and get to know the business better by providing some support for a few people....Out of the collective, I think we have ten people that are paid."

**David:** "But you're talking all the projects now: AKA, Left Bank, the publishing and distribution."

**Kent:** "Many of those ten are part time workers."

**Russell:** "Our full-time work week is 32 hours....Our wage compared to this society is very low. It's at \$6.00 an hour for those who get paid. And if you were to include all the hours we actually put in—which we have some requirements that we don't get paid for—our wage would be much lower, maybe down around \$4.00 an hour or \$3.00 an hour depending on each individual and how much time they put in. I think we have ten people that are paid at least partially at this time. There are six men and four women. But we should right away head off that the collective does not only include the paid members. We're not a closed collective. People can get involved in any aspect of the collective whether they're paid or not."

**David:** "An example is when we did our inventory recently at AKA thirty-six people showed up. At Left Bank it was also very high, twenty-some people, I believe, showed up there, which is pretty good because it's such a small store."

**Russell:** "And we have many volunteers at Left Bank Books. And our success really still goes back to the beginning of the store when it was volunteer. It depends on volunteer labor, on people that are interested in learn-

ing about books, working with books, and furthering certain ideals they see as valuable. For instance, a volunteer now can commit to working three hours a week for a minimum of three months and they receive training and education concerning books and also a very large discount on anything they're interested in purchasing."

**Russell:** "And one of the other things I'd like to say about the collective is that at this time when people enter the collective, we still have a process where if you are volunteering you learn skills, and then if an opening does appear, that's how we select people who join us. It's sort of a natural process where people are working together already. We see if we can get along. And then if there's an opening someone is offered it, if we can afford it."

**David:** "One thing that should be pointed out is that nobody has a personal financial stake in this collective. And when you come in it doesn't cost you anything...and you don't take anything out. So I've worked here since '78,...and I don't have any claim on the store. When I leave I go out just like I came in with nothing....It's not like some collectives where you have to put up a certain amount of capital to get in, you have to buy into the collective with money and you have shares, and then when you go out you cash out. We don't have that."

**Russell:** "We also don't have any form of profit-sharing. If at the end of the year, if we're lucky enough, to have more money than we started with, that money gets put back into the different projects that we sponsor in various ways. We've been fortunate recently to be able to buy some equipment that we needed, and to also support many different projects in the city...."

**David:** "We have...collective meetings every month, and get together to talk about our business, and the issues that come up. And we do get requests for donations and that sort of thing."

**Jason:** "Was that how the decision was made to help Black Cat collective?"

**Russell:** "It's sort of off of the German collective model of the collectives, once they've been established, to help support other collectives. And that is that they should float a proposal to you and the other various collectives. Fortunately there they have a lot of 'em, so every collective doesn't have to kick in much. And if you like the idea then you can support their start, and they will continue to help support other ventures."

**David:** "I think when Black Cat originally came to us they were looking for money, start-up money to help make improvements and buy equipment. I think, as I recall, they came to us with a proposal for a thousand dollar loan. And we said no, we'd rather do something concrete. And it ended up being two thousand dollars so they could get their espresso machine. They ended up getting more, actually."

**Jason:** "How did it work when AKA was started? Was it like Black Cat...?"

**David:** "A fellow had a small used bookstore. He was going out of business. And we went to look at books for Left Bank. And he offered, he said he'd sell us the whole store for three thousand bucks, a thousand up front and two thousand the next year. And we sort of went through the store and thought that would be reasonable. And since Left Bank was doing used books already in conjunction with the new books, it seemed like a logical extension. It was also more space....Until that time we'd been doing distribution and publishing stuff right out of Left Bank, a very tiny bookstore. So by opening a used bookstore at that time, it allowed us to make some shifts in the physical space and to pay another person. And also it just increases the scope of the kind of books you can offer. It's wonderful to have all the new books that we think are valuable and important. But there's lots of books that are going out of print. And this gave us a way to supply those. Particularly when you get into radical, or labor, or black studies, or lots of small, obscure books that there's no way you can find them anywhere. You couldn't find them anywhere at that time. There was nobody doing any radical used books here, particularly in any kind of organized way....And it seemed like a natural extension of what we were already trying to do, with our mail-order, with our publishing, with our distribution, with Left Bank for the new books....AKA started out with five hundred square feet. It had two rooms, plus a huge basement, and that's where we had the prison project, and the distribution, and the old printing equipment we'd had in garages. From there between rental problems with the landlord, and wanting more room, we located a house that was actually cheaper rent than was twice the size of what we were doing....And then after three years there, we were again faced with a rental problem where the building was possibly be torn down, so we decided to move to a better location and more space, which led us to our present location. And we're kind of faced with the same problem right now. We're up

against an odd lease situation, where when our lease expires we may have to find another location. Space is a problem again...."

**Jason:** "Are you selling more books every year at the stores and through distribution?"

**David:** "The last year has sort of levelled off. It's the first year it's levelled off. It may be the nature of the building, or the business, or the economy. It's difficult to know."

**Russell:** "It's very hard to tell exactly where we're at with the distribution, since most of the books we're holding on a consignment basis, and we pay quarterly. We'll know a lot more after the end of January how we're doing. And also, we've taken on a number of new expenses with distribution this year. The Reading Room/Prison Project Space/Graphic Arts Area that is a storefront that has no income-generating possibilities at this time is being funded primarily by distribution, with also AKA Books and Left Bank Books chipping in some of the money. So distribution is taking on a large load, and we really have been very thankful of all the people that have supported us over the last years. And in particular over the last two years, where direct mail-order has really helped us out a lot in being able to start and fund something like the space that we've created there. And we're hoping that people continue to order books through us and continue to help us do the kind of work that we're interested in."

One of the things about distribution that's an interesting issue is that we sell new books mailorder to people at a retail cost. And some distribution outfits, particularly a lot of the younger ones that have started up, really try to give people a big discount. And so we supply books to some of those people and they're mainly all-volunteer operations. And they just mark things up a minimal amount in order to keep things going. But we've taken the approach that we...still believe that we're getting very good books to people at the going price, and we try to charge the actual shipping cost to people as much as possible. We don't pad the shipping and handling."

**Jason:** "If other people are interested in getting together radical book distribution projects in their own towns, would you recommend checking out to see if there's already any cooperatives in existence...?"

**Russell:** "It's a difficult question given the state of our state, the state of the state in 1994....Our approach has been, for instance, when we built the storefront space that now houses the Reading Room and the Books To



Pitter, Katherine, Shari and Deirdre take a break from work in the Black Cat kitchen.

## Black Cat Cafe

If you're looking for some delicious and healthy food in Seattle, try the Black Cat Cafe on Roosevelt Way. This relatively new vegetarian cafe collective has become a popular hangout on the strength of its relaxed and homey atmosphere, reasonable prices and commitment to the local community.

Popular menu items include: Biscuits & Gravy, Chilaquiles, Home Fries with Veggies, Tofu Scramble, Black Bean (or Garbanzo Bean) Burritos, Salads and Soups.

With a total of six collective members along with ten to twelve volunteers sharing the work, the kitchen is always bustling with activity. But it wasn't long ago that the building was abandoned and boarded up, before opening on the final day of August last year.

Black Cat collective member David Carlson remembers that, "This place had been Morningtown since 1968, and on and off it had been a collective....We signed a five year lease to open it....[and] we started construction and renovation, which was all just by volunteers." The cafe was financed by "Everybody put[ting] in \$1,000 in equity at the start, and we got a couple great no-interest loans from people....And Left Bank, of course, gave us a loan for an espresso machine and donated the cash register for us."

He adds that "This is really a Left Bank baby. It couldn't have happened without them. And we go to the for advice all the time, just by virtue of their being the only collective left in Seattle....They're very open and approachable...."

Another collective member,

Pitter Nordal, comments that he wanted to start a collectively-run bar, but knew three of the people in the Black Cat collective when he returned from a trip to Mexico. So he started volunteering, just like he had volunteered for years at Left Bank. "It sort of feels like I haven't gone out and got a job, and I'm sort of cheating. Because even though there are things to worry about...and you work really hard and you get really tired, it's not the same as working doing something really stupid where you don't have any say over how you do it. It just...doesn't feel like a job." And, he says that at Black Cat "We can do things like the coffeehouses. It's really great to be able to do things that have something to do with the community, and making more than just a place to work."

**Black Cat Cafe: Vegetarian Collective Kitchen, 4110 Roosevelt Way NE, Seattle, WA 98144 (206) 547-3887**

**Hours: Tues.-Sat. 10 AM to 10 PM  
Sun. 10 AM to 7 PM**





## Radical Distribution

Prisoners project and graphic arts area, we did that through asking for help from people in the community. And we had a series of 'barn-raising' so to speak. Every Sunday we would get there and have bagels and have a work crew going, and we'd try to get as many people involved as possible. Not only could you learn new skills about carpentry, but you could also help out...So I would say that if anybody's interested in doing any kind of project in your community, you could do it yourself. But also look around to see what resources you do have. And look out of state, too. You know, there are different things that we can help out, and other projects around the country, too, can help individual projects starting up. Cause it's really difficult to start up."

David: "On a local level, mainly it's trying to get people to help each other and working in a mutually beneficial way. Sometimes it's more difficult than working by yourself or with one other person, because you're involving lots of different personalities and intentions and ideals and factors, but the more people you can get involved, the larger base of support you have towards ensuring the success of your project...And it's important to talk to other people and other groups that have attempted to do these things, because it isn't written down. And no matter what's written down, it never seems to quite have the realistic touch that personal contact can make. You know, when you call around and talk to a store that's been in existence for ten years, I mean that's a lot of experience that they can help supply you with on different levels. How to organize your project. Are you going to try to make money or you're not going to try to make money? Are you trying to do this or trying to do that? Other people have done that already and can help you in some way. Or can steer you to other people who have done similar kinds of projects and what their experiences are..."

Russell: "Talk to as many people as possible...In our collective—and I'm not speaking for all the volunteers since I don't know them all—we're loosely based as an anarchist collective, and most of us have a strong affinity to anti-authoritarian and anarchist ideas. But we have never fallen into—at least in the last five years—the pitfall of trying to define ourselves as a unified group. And that seems like one of the biggest pitfalls. People call me up and say they're starting this project and they're just getting their statements together or their ideas. And it's not necessary. I mean, all ten of us are different individuals and we all think differently."

David: "Practice is more important than all the ideology in the world. You know, and the ability to work together. Because sometimes you can have full agreement politically or ideologically, or however you're gonna put it, but on a personal level you don't get along with somebody and you can't work with 'em. Or maybe you can socialize with 'em, but you can't work with 'em. So you have to work those things out. And really what's important in the long term is the ability of a group of people to work together around a broad or general kind of idea or practice."

Kent: "The desire to work together above all is what you need to survive as a collective, for some common purpose. And even though it may sound crass, if you want to run a business, you do have to ask other businesses that are out there...if you want to run a collective business and have it succeed it is a good idea to ask other people who have done it in practice, as opposed to setting up a few abstract ideals and trying to work off that. You have to do what works, basically."

Russell: "We get criticized from some people on the fact that our books cost money and they're not free, and we're not making them available as free resources to everyone. Well, there weren't that many books around, and there wouldn't be that many books around for very long if they were all free. But I think people's minds are so jumbled about dealing with capitalism and this society that they don't see that also working for yourself and doing it in a non-hierarchical way is difficult, but yes, you're freeing yourself out of the boss mentality. We have a lot of struggles collectively. It's not always easy. Sometimes it's great and smooth and excellent, but it's a fight all along. But at least we feel that we're pulling ourselves out of the traditional capitalistic model of rat-race, pull-yourself-ahead-of-the-next-person-as-aggressively-as-you-possibly-can mentality."

And for that matter, for people who are starting projects, you have to decide whether or not you're oriented towards selling things and having a mark-up. And the part that gets confusing is people think that if you're marking up things and selling them...that you're making a profit...whereas...it's what you do with that profit that people get confused about. I mean if the profit only goes back into the project or to yourselves and you're doing respectable things with the money that's one thing. But unless it's going to be an all-donation, all-giveaway project like the Diggers, or something else like that, you're going to have to charge something for what you're selling. And I don't think that's

necessarily a bad thing, especially if you're looking at collectives and wanting to pull people out of the rat-race."

Kent: "And in terms of overall access to information, since we do different projects within the collective, we do charge money for certain books that go through the mail and all that, but we also balance it out. The money that we do make from some projects goes towards others. We do send out a lot of free information. We do send out a lot of free books to prisoners. We do have a reading room where people are welcome to hang out and read a lot of the books. Increasingly a lot of the books there are ones we have from distribution. We're donating some of those so that people, at least those who live in Seattle, have access to books without having to buy them."

David: "I personally wouldn't say it gets us out of the rat-race. It probably helps us buy into the rat-race. We certainly don't work any less hard. It's just as bad as any place else. Except for the degree that I can be slinging hamburgers, or I can be doing this other job over here where I don't have to work for a boss, and maybe some of the things that I'm working towards I think are important. I can help contribute to the break-down of the rat-race or the breakdown of capitalism. There's no guarantee, obviously...Co-ops are very useful and they do undercut certain notions, but for the most part they're not anti-capitalist or anti-authoritarian. They see themselves as doing the same job as Safeway does, only they want to provide a better type of foods and maybe make it a little more democratic. But really the mistake, particularly with a business project, is to think that you're doing something radical or revolutionary. I've seen people come in with that attitude, or think they're going to create something like that. But we're all working within this commodity capitalist system, the society of the spectacle. And all we're doing really is choosing our poisons, and hopefully in a small way contributing to undermining all that. Maybe not so much in the commodity, but maybe the ideas that are embedded in those commodities. Maybe we can subvert the commodities, and someday those books will be free."

This interview will be continued in the next issue of APR.

Write for a free catalog! Left Bank Distribution can be contacted at: 4142 Brooklyn Avenue NE, Seattle, WA 98105 (Phone: 206-632-5870), which is also the address for AKA Books. Left Bank Books is located at 92 Pike St., Seattle, WA 98101.

SELECTIONS  
The Revolutionary PoseRevolutionary Politics  
THE REBEL'S NEW CLOTHES

I spent a couple of years as a revolutionary agitator in various grouplets. In a past century I might have thrown myself with equal passion into some Nonconformist religious sect. As a student in the nineteen-seventies I just happened to find myself surrounded by a multitude of radicals: feminists, anarchists, Maoists and Trotskyists. I felt it was *de rigueur* to espouse one of these ideologies, believing that only dead-heads supported the status quo.

I was principally attracted to politics through a child-like desire to have the world explained. Like most young people I found uncertainty profoundly unsettling. Marxism provided me with a logical perspective through which to view life. It explained poverty and misery and supplied the heroes and villains which are so necessary for youth brought up on pantomimes and comic books. Lenin was heroic because he had actually conducted a revolution. Trotsky because he offered hope in his cohesive plan for an extension of that revolution. (A couple of visits to the Soviet Union have cured me of my communist fantasies. I believe that ineptitude is one characteristic of Russian society that predates the revolution. Perhaps some Swiss efficiency rubbed off on Lenin during his exile in Zurich, enabling him to oust his more bumbling political rivals.)

Armed with explanations for most social phenomena I felt intellectually superior to my fellow students and teachers. I could account for the decline of the USSR into a degenerated workers' state. I knew that Hitler was only able to take power because the Socialists of the Weimar Republic had crushed the revolutionary workers' movement.

On a personal level I felt equipped to sort out my own problems and to act as an advisor to my friends. Private angst, I reasoned, was no one's fault, but a natural product of class/sex/or racial oppression. Individual worries would be overcome by throwing oneself into the movement that was fighting to end all human misery. I would try to put

my own problems into perspective by remembering the Trotskyists in Stalin's camps who sang the Internationale as they faced the firing squad.

Another appealing aspect of revolutionary politics was that they provided me with a social entrée. As soon as I declared myself to be a sympathizer of a certain group I would be showered with invitations to meetings, dinners, and parties. Rival groups courted me in the hope of making a conversion. Occasionally I got pissed at the expense of conservative students who thought they were being terribly risqué by inviting a Red to their functions.

Revolutionary groups exploit their appeal to lonely souls. I knew of several organiza-

**"Like myself, most people bury themselves in mindless political activism because popular morality has instilled in them the belief that 'doing things for others' is a valid justification for their existences. This delusion is particularly common amongst the female sex. Most of womenkind devote their lives to servicing others."**

tions who made it their practice to scour halls of residence, knocking on doors of students new to London. On the same principle, Moonies hang around long-distance bus stations accosting solitary travellers.

Many people join political groups in the hope of finding romance. A friend in Manchester said he always welcomed the representative of the Revolutionary Communist Party into his flat for a discussion because she wore a mini and fishnets.

One of the groups I supported frowned on anyone who had sexual relations with non-members. A female comrade had been expelled for sleeping with her factory foreman, a "class enemy." Once "inside the spaceship" (as they called the party) personal ties with the outside world were discouraged.

Politics helped me overcome my natural shyness by providing me with an inexhaustible supply of conversational topics. I broke the ice at parties by hurling invective at revisionists. (I always admired the ability of members of the Workers' Revolutionary Party to remain poker-faced while denouncing political opponents as "petty-bourgeois

dilettantes" and "neo-Kantian idealists." The Workers' Institute of Brixton were even madder. I heard a girl who spoke with a Princess Diana accent tell a meeting that the Chinese people were building a weather machine which would be powerful enough to freeze Niagara Falls. The consequent damage to the American economy would be an act of retribution against US imperialism which had created the massive Chinese earthquake of 1978. Meanwhile, she assured us, the People's Army were tunnelling through the center of the earth. They would emerge in Australia, where they would proceed to foment the glorious communist revolution.)

I built a protective armor of theory around myself, and had fun tilting at people who had done likewise. I armed myself with incisive critiques of state capitalism, popular fronts, and national liberation movements.

One day my armor was pierced by a pass-

ing skinhead in Portobello Road. He declined my invitation to buy a paper and asked whether I had nothing better to do. For over a year I had been dodging this question out of laziness and guilt.

Like myself, most people bury themselves in mindless political activism because popular morality has instilled in them the belief that "doing things for others" is a valid justification for their existences. This delusion is particularly common amongst the female sex. Most of womenkind devote their lives to servicing others. They not only find their *raison d'être* in looking after their immediate families, but in becoming the handmaidens of "higher causes." Up and down the country middle-aged women busy themselves with organizing church fêtes and embroidering altar pieces. Their daughters believe they are rebelling against their conditioning by peddling socialist literature on windy street corners. They arrange meetings and debates in upstairs rooms of pubs, occasionally making so bold as to address the meetings themselves on "women's issues." Traditional female skills are also handy for



## SELECTIONS The Revolutionary Pose

typing up minutes and sweeping out the headquarters of subversive organizations. Such devotion is a form of atonement for the effrontery of being alive.

Feminists have already pointed out the ease with which male revolutionaries reduce their female comrades to dogsbodies. It would be more pertinent to question why so many women acquiesce to this treatment, but some feminists are too busy taking advantage of this aspect of female conditioning to do so. Many women in single sex groups play out their submissive roles with equal gusto. Separatism was initiated by women who wanted their own political domain in which to play their power games.

Some people are scared by the prospect of waking up in the morning and wondering what in the world to do. They relieve themselves of the problem by becoming careerists, drug addicts, parents, or revolutionaries. Tasks are arranged, as if by external necessity.

**"Feminists have already pointed out the ease with which male revolutionaries reduce their female comrades to dogsbodies. It would be more pertinent to question why so many women acquiesce to this treatment, but some feminists are too busy taking advantage of this aspect of female conditioning to do so."**

ty. These take precedence over personal desires. Of course, the perfect cadre, functionary or parent sees no contradiction between living for the party, the company, or the child and living for the self. They are driven to serve something outside themselves through a desperate fear of being useless and unneeded.

Just as many men feel useless after retirement, and quickly die, so revolutionaries cling to their causes to the point of breakdown. I knew many who believed that life without the party would be desolate to an unbearable degree.

Political organizations encourage their followers to immerse themselves in tales of failed uprisings, massacres, injustice and misery. I once found a young comrade, in tears. She showed me a newspaper article she had been reading. It described the extermination of Guatemalan peasants by government death squads. "I can't stand the cruelty of the world," she said. A bright nineteen year old of low self-esteem, she was easy pickings for an organization keen to exploit her feelings of helplessness in the face of the

world's misery.

Almost all the party members were of middle-class origin, so they were well-practiced at instilling guilt feelings in others. Their contacts had to be made to feel they should atone for their relatively "privileged" existences. They could be shriven only by joining the party. The good cadre disregards personal desires by shouldering the burdens of suffering humanity.

It took me until my mid-twenties to realize that I did not have to live for others, that joylessness helps no one at all, least of all myself. A few months in a Brazilian slum kicked my altruism in the gut. I made friends with youths who lived off their wits in the streets, and others who worked long hours in local factories. One fifteen year old took me around the Coca-Cola plant where he worked. His daily task was to scramble back and forth along a plank bridging a conveyor belt, righting bottles that had toppled over.

Had he fallen off his plank, he would almost certainly have been sucked into a giant metal drum that scooped up the bottles.

Yet my friend was happy with his weekly wage and considered it beneath his dignity to complain about his job. Grumbling about their lot in life was unacceptable to his circle (in contrast to the Brazilian middle-classes, who did little else). When I asked whether they were not discontented with their poverty they laughed and suggested we go to the beach rather than discuss "serious" things. They would have laughed even harder at the notion of earnest people sitting in smoky rooms above British pubs discussing their plight and that of millions like them.

For their part, revolutionaries are enraged by those who refuse to be cast in the role of oppressed. My Brazilian friends were utterly cynical of politics, preferring to dedicate their lives to football, samba, carnival, rum, sex, and swimming. They realized that the only way out of their poverty was by crime, an escape route that is unacceptable to political agitators in any country. An insubordinate "victim" class threatens the livelihood

of the revolutionary.

The spectacle of revolutionaries locked in debate over the dispossessed is absurd. They work themselves into a passion about people for whom they do not give a damn in order to browbeat their opponents and impress their audience. Orwell pilloried this type of ham actor in *The Road to Wigan Pier*. "Sometimes I look at a Socialist—the intellectual tract-writing type of Socialist—with his pullover and fuzzy hair and Marxian quotation and wonder what the devil his motive really is. It is often difficult to believe that it is a love for anybody, especially of the working-class, from whom he is of all people the furthest removed. The underlying motive of many socialists, I believe, is simply a hypertrophied sense of order."<sup>2</sup>

Greater than the urge to impose order onto chaos is the revolutionary's desperation to impose his or her will onto others. The world is full of petty dictators scrambling for power. Those who feel thwarted by society at large find it easy enough to surround themselves with lackeys and call themselves a "revolutionary group."

The petty tyrants who lead revolutionary parties are beset by paranoia over having their power usurped. I once watched the central committee of a Trotskyist group rant at one of their "comrades." They accused her of failing to pay back some money she had borrowed from the organization. The more she pleaded with them not to suspend her membership the louder they screamed that she was guilt-tripping them, and that they would not tolerate her attempts at moral blackmail. I sense that none of them gave a damn for the money. They had found a convenient whipping-post on which to vent their inner rage and frustration. This was a show designed to impress each other and to awe their audience.

Without followers the bully would have no power. Victims are selected in order to demonstrate to the rest their fate if they do not toe the line. Fear and a wish for an easy life turn people into lackeys. Some of these hope that by licking up enough spittle they will inherit power for themselves.

I did not have to wait long to become victimized myself. The leader of my organization, a man who had failed in his attempt to become an M.P. in his own country, imagined that I was conspiring against him behind his back. He called a meeting at which

John Zerzan's

## FUTURE PRIMITIVE

Now available direct  
from C.A.L. Press, publisher of  
*Alternative Press Review*

Send \$7.00 (plus \$1.50 for postage & packaging) in cash, money order or check (to C.A.L.). Or, subscribe or extend your subscription—to APR for two years and you'll get a free complimentary copy of this important new book while our supply lasts. Along with the title essay, *Future Primitive* includes "The Mass Psychology of Misery," "Tonality and the Totality," "The Catastrophe of Postmodernism," and all nine entries of "The Nihilist's Dictionary." Please allow 60 days for delivery.

C.A.L. Press, POB 1446, Columbia, MO 65205-1446.

he accused me of "poisonous cliquism." One after another, party members responded by rising to their feet, facing me, and pointing out the counter-revolutionary implications of my crime (as I watched their displays of fake passion, I had a flashback of my former headmistress holding the entire school in detention because someone had decorated the organ with flower stickers. Her anger had seemed as absurd as the manufactured rage of my "comrades"). I was apparently guilty of undermining the leadership, and hence the entire organization. Indignant, and loath to gratify them with a show-trial confession, I dropped out of the group.

A year later I ran into a bunch of my former comrades. They half-apologized, explaining that the erstwhile leader had been expelled. It transpired that he had been beating up his wife, and another comrade had attempted suicide because he had convinced her that to have the baby she desired would be incompatible with revolutionary socialism. I replied that he would not have got away with his behavior for so long if they had not all been so sheepish. If I had seen the Stalin purges in microcosm, and no, thanks, I did not want to be rehabilitated.

Petty tyrants like the leader of that group can spend years terrorizing those around them. Obviously not every power-hungry sadist gets to run governments and corporations. Aspiring dictators and their followers wait for mass social upheavals in the hope of a chance to have a crack at the whip.

I once rented a flat from an 82-year-old Pole, who had been an army captain when the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact was signed. As an officer, he had been interned in a Russian prison camp for two years. A group had been taken out each week to be shot. He was in the group designated by the letter "I." They had reached group "G" when they stopped the executions without explanation, and kept the rest prisoner. At times the Polish officers were reduced to living on grass. My landlord was a cheerful old man who would sit surrounded by his war memorabilia, taking the piss out of his tenants with malicious glee. Night after night, however, we were awakened by cries and pleas. Despite his nightmares, he said he did not resent the Russians, "they're just people like us." He reserved his hatred for the Komsomol, despising them for their mindless enthusiasm and their eagerness to obey orders. Some of the revolutionaries I have known would have made fine Komsomol executioners given half a chance.

-Claudia

This essay first appeared in the pamphlet *The Rebel's New Clothes*, available from: BM Claudia, London WC1N 3XX, England for \$5 cash or £MO £3.25.



## From The Edge To The Ordinary

Hacker Zines	Fashion Victims
Political Conspiracy	Psychotronic Film
Animation	Fringe Science
UFO's	Fortean
Propaganda	Neurozines
Trash Culture	Fanzines
Psychotropics/Drugs	Queerzines
Sexually Disenfranchised	Wiccan/Pagan/Goddess
Ecology	Media/Video
Mondo	Occult
Self-Sufficient	Alternative Energy

## Magazine Wholesalers To The Retail Trade

\*International Terms Available  
\*Mail Order to Individuals Available  
Send \$4 for new catalog.  
Amount reimbursed with first order.

Desert Moon Periodicals  
1226-A Calle de Comercio  
Santa Fe, NM 87505  
505/474-6311 Fax/474-6317



## The PLO/Israeli Treaty

### ANOTHER DEFEAT FOR THE PALESTINIANS

"The affairs of a puppet play are not to be taken too seriously"

-Wu Cailuan, 9th century Taoist adept

The internationally televised signing of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)/Israel peace treaty Sept. 11 brought to mind Geronimo's surrender to General Crook in Arizona 111 years earlier. Although the Apache struggle against their white settler enemies lasted even longer than that of the Palestinians against the Europeans who seized their land in 1948, the equation was much the same.

When the remaining Apaches entered the San Carlos reservation after 300 years of battle against the Mexicans and 70 of fighting the U.S. blue coats, it was an admission of definitive defeat, one which abandoned the idea of ever regaining the land lost to the invaders. Depending upon one's view, either the same abject defeat has befallen the Palestinians, or they have at least gained a foothold to wrest some of the occupied territories back from the conquerors.

Either way, the treaty only recognized reality; the guerrillaist fantasy against one of the world's most powerful armies was already a dead letter, and even the intifada had reached an impasse. Was (or is) there a realistic possibility of the Palestinians regaining their stolen land? Probably no more than have the Huron, Shawnee, Lakota, or Cheyenne.

#### Giving the PLO a Poison Pill

Certainly on the face of it, Arafat's trip to Washington was a stinging humiliation. The proud "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians," surrounded by beaming imperial functionaries who had bankrolled his people's defeat and displacement, now obsequiously shook hands with the victor of the 1967 war. An icy Prime Minister Itzak Rabin did no more than assent to Arafat's increasingly empty designation in a terse letter, and granted the PLO territory it may have no

more success in governing than did the Israeli military.

(One journalist observed that handing over the Gaza Strip, a place that Edward Said has called "one of the most miserable places on earth," was equivalent to giving the PLO a "poison pill.")

In return, Arafat (unilaterally and without even convening the PLO governing council) agreed to the terms demanded by the settler government. In an act of extraordinary servility, Arafat also acceded in his letter of mutual recognition to Rabin, that the PLO was renouncing "the use of terrorism and other acts of violence," thus affirming the mythology that the Israelis are the victims, when in fact the figure of Arabs killed by Israelis is

**"In an act of extraordinary servility, Arafat...acceded in his letter of mutual recognition to Rabin, that the PLO was renouncing 'the use of terrorism and other acts of violence,' thus affirming the mythology that the Israelis are the victims.... Needless to say, the Israeli state was not expected to renounce its own terrorism and violence."**

vastly higher (20,000 people killed in the 1982 Lebanon invasion alone).

Arafat's wing of the Palestinian liberation movement had long since renounced armed assault and had recognized Israel's right to existence years ago in compliance with United Nations resolutions, but Israel conveniently ignored this to keep the PLO positioned as its enemy. Needless to say, the Israeli state was not expected to renounce its own terrorism and violence.

Arafat's permanent state of warfare with Zionism proved somewhat beneficial to him, as well as to some of the Palestinians in the occupied territories and in the Diaspora, as long as the PLO received heavy funding from Arab nations. This financed the privileged strata of the PLO bureaucracy which administered a wide range of social welfare, educational and financial programs throughout the world. When those sources dried up because of Arafat's ill-advised support for Saddam Hussein during the Persian Gulf War, the PLO was left almost broke and its authority eroding in favor of the militant and uncompromised Islamic fundamentalists.

Perhaps the one positive aspect of the treaty was that the Zionist state went from absolute denial of the very existence of the Palestinians as a people to formal, if empty, recognition of them. But despite the understandable display of joy and hopes for peace among sections of both the Arab and Jewish populations, afterwards, the agreement in Washington was more a sign of an unresolvable and deteriorating situation than one of reconciliation and genuine peace. Arafat and the PLO, reviled and despised for decades, suddenly became Israel's best hope for maintaining the status quo in the Middle East, and Tel Aviv's willingness to grant Arafat the status of cop of a Gaza/West Bank bantustan took shape in

terms of the peace treaty. Both parties had to move quickly before neither had the authority to negotiate.

#### Windbags in Suits

What is in store for the national aspirations of the Palestinians is perhaps best represented by a small New York Times article dated Oct. 2, 1993, reporting that 32,000 Palestinians have applied for jobs in the new security force which will be created to police areas Israel will leave. It is always easiest to perceive the true character of nation states at their inception—an armed body of men, without whom politicians are nothing but windbags in suits.

Maintaining the status quo will essentially mean recognition of the Palestinians' right to retain—along with their flag and other relatively meaningless national icons—their position as low-paid agricultural and construction workers inside Israel. Likewise, Israel will continue to control municipal utilities, for example, the increasingly scarce water supply, mostly under the West Bank,

for which Palestinians pay dearly.

That this settlement is a gamble for Arafat is obvious, and is underscored by defections and assassinations of PLO officials by rival factions. But it is also a gamble for Israel. On a certain level it may be a shrewd gambit: while yielding almost nothing, the Israelis will either bring the PLO under the control of their state security apparatus or destroy it altogether.

The status of Jerusalem is apparently not even open to discussion. There is no promise to stop building Israeli infrastructure, let alone dismantle existing settlements, and the U.N.-recognized rights of the 50% of the Palestinians scattered outside the occupied territories seem to have been annulled. For signing, the Israelis are to be handsomely rewarded by their U.S. patrons with continuing multi-billion dollar yearly aid packages, more sophisticated weapons and communications technology.

But the agreement does nothing to alleviate (and even aggravates) the long-term problems that led to the present unstable situation, potentially pulling both societies toward the "power vacuum" that all politicians dread, and the violent maelstrom that inevitably follows. The rising expectations of an oppressed, highly nationalistic population with legitimate claims to much more of Israeli occupied territory (including a share of Israel itself) could blow up in the faces of those who have made the deal.

These are of course the precarious conditions that Israel already faced, which is part of the reason Rabin signed the treaty. The Labor Party is banking on the agreement stilling the hand of extremist elements among the Palestinians and its own people. The rise of the fundamentalist Islamic Hamas and other uncompromising nationalists who regard the PLO as sell-outs, portends trouble for both camps; it will now be the task of the PLO cops to deal with them. On the Israeli side, the increasing lynch mob militancy of heavily-armed, religio-fascist West Bank settlers—who are threatening a "Jewish intifada" or civil war against the accord, and who in any event support the right-wing Likud or religious parties—heightened the Labor government's desire to undercut their geographical and increasing population base.

What lies ahead? Continued obscene loan packages and armaments for Israel will be accompanied by the \$2 billion in contribu-

tions from Western industrialized nations, Japan and Arab sheiks to the PLO-controlled Jericho and Gaza. While these investments may erase some of the grinding poverty there (in Jericho the unemployment rate is around 50%), Israel intends to keep whatever territory it cedes as dependent entities. Palestinian "sovereignty" will amount to little more than suppressing reservation riots and collecting the garbage.

The Arab population will be tossed a

**"...peace and reconciliation appear to be as remote as ever...Outside of the PLO and Israeli state machinery there exist glimmers of communities and projects paying allegiance to neither racket. It is there that the only hope lies."**

handful of *maquiladora*-like sweatshop jobs as the Israeli economy becomes further integrated into the global market. The PLO will get to be the cops, like black collaborators in the South African bantustans, but beyond that, Israel will be calling all of the shots. Even U.S. State Department shill, "Mideast specialist" Thomas Friedman, remarked in the September 15 New York Times that after the Israeli army withdraws from Jericho and Gaza, "they will be down the road, surrounding both places."

Just like in South Africa where the chiefs and ten-cent presidents of the bantustans have a vested interest in maintaining the charade of sovereignty and nationhood while operating their territories primarily as personal rackets, so the potential exists for Arafat and the PLO. When a real movement for liberation emerges, or when the pathology of Islamic fundamentalism threatens to engulf the situation endorsed by the very Western forces which propped up Israel all of these years, won't Arafat just be another Chief Buthelezi?

Arafat is correct in assessing that not many other alternatives exist for the Palestinians. Armed struggle by guerrilla groups has always been a chimera, but one that conveniently existed as a rationale for Israeli state terror and its bunker mentality which legitimated land theft, strategies of "ethnic cleansing" of the indigenous population, wars, and the creation of a nuclear state.

#### Blood and Soil Ideologies

Few realize that in the 45 years of Israeli existence, fewer than 700 Israeli civilians have been killed by Palestinian guerrillas. In the same period, Israel has slaughtered tens of thousands of Palestinian and Lebanese civilians (including scores of children whose "crime" was throwing stones), wiped out 400 villages, imprisoned thousands without trial, dynamited houses, cut down thousands of trees in orchards, and engaged in collective punishment in an attempt to terrorize the "natives" into submission.

To anyone clear-headed enough to notice such hideous historic ironies, all of this starkly evokes the Nazi policy of ten-to-one retaliation, though in many aspects it is the same policy pursued throughout history by all expansionist empires based on blood-and-soil ideologies. A Jewish nationalist statism inevitably had to turn out to be as foul and

irrational as all the others.

So insane became the Israeli attempts to repress signs of that other nationalism in the occupied territories that their policy of forbidding the display of the Palestinian flag led youth in the Gaza strip to taunt Israeli soldiers with slice of watermelon which contained the red and green colors of their flag. For this violation they often met the same fate of those engaging in more militant acts.

Despite the poignant images of celebrating Jewish and Palestinian crowds, peace and reconciliation appear to be as remote as ever. It was rather the sagging fortunes of the PLO, coupled with the desperation of and Israeli state plagued by economic stagnation, political crisis, and a relentless cycle of polarization and violence, that compelled both camps to sign a treaty which is so problematic it may never get off the ground. When one considers the model of Bosnia, the authentic human choice of dropping all borders and creating a secular, multi-ethnic, classless community seems even less possible.

Outside of the PLO and Israeli state machinery there exist glimmers of communities and projects paying allegiance to neither racket. It is there where the only hope lies.

**-George Bradford & E.B. Maple**

This essay first appeared in the Fall/Winter 1993 issue (Vol. 28, #3) of the quarterly tabloid *Fifth Estate*, 4632 Second Ave., Detroit, MI 48201. Subscriptions are \$6.00/year. No copyright.



## Play Me GIRLZ JUST WANNA HAVE?

The second I thought about it, it occurred to me that I have a pretty bratty attitude towards fun. I insist on having it now, even perhaps, when it is not to be had, because fun exists entirely in the mind of the beholder. The idea of fun always used to conjure up times when I couldn't get it, and now I must. Because I can, I insist. Just try to stop me. Arrested adolescence strikes again.

### Not Getting It

I was a fun-deprived teen—I think. At least I suspected at the time that a lot of people out there were having a lot more fun getting to do a lot of things I never got to do. Like make out, or go to concerts, or parties, or drive a cherry-red Camaro too fast down Rollercoaster Road in the middle of the night. (I only got to drive my parents' plastic, turd-brown Toyota really fast when I was home from college, and it somehow didn't seem like the same thing.) So I had a mild case of fun-envy, assuming that my fun (writing up in my room, drawing, staying up as late as possible to consume novels, old movies and economy-size ice cream) was not actual fun. Midsummer midnight bike rides were, and so was going up to the field to look at the stars, but I guess it only took on the aura of "fun" once I was sharing it with my new best friend, Lin, whereas all the things I loved to do before that only happened when I was totally alone. Does fun exist only outside oneself?

The things that were supposed to be fun never quite worked out as advertised, anyway. The one boy adventure I remember—driving around with Scott R. and a bottle of wine—was great until I realized he wanted to make out. (I brilliantly deduced this when his car rolled gently to a halt at a dead end. Oh.) Despite the fact that he was totally sexy and knew it (many other sensitive arty girls in school also had lethal crushes on him) it was getting what everyone else wanted and then not wanting what I got. Like opening

the suave guy's door in Mystery Date, when I'd prefer the dork. Here was this bedroom blue-eyed, full-lipped, sultry saxplayer with his head in my lap—why wasn't I having a good time? There was something fake about the whole thing. Maybe he believed in his own mystique too much. Maybe he lost me when he said he was gonna be the next Charlie Parker. (Yeah, and I'm Vermeer.) Maybe life was much more complex and confusing than I'd ever guessed, even for those people who were getting what they wanted.

I bet if I found myself at a Blue Oyster Cult or Aerosmith show at the Spectrum I wouldn't have had such a good time either. I'm sure I'd have felt there was something weirdly incomplete about the experience, something inauthentic—I'm not a boy, not a stoner. I don't have faded concert t-shirts to

**"The things that were supposed to be fun never quite worked out as advertised, anyway. The one boy adventure I remember—driving around with Scott R. and a bottle of wine—was great until I realized he wanted to make out. (I brilliantly deduced this when his car rolled gently to a halt at a dead end. Oh.)"**

prove my pedigree as a devotee. I didn't know all the words. Elvis Costello's hyper-conscious sardonicism might have fit me better, but he wasn't playing arenas yet. Going with Lin to see Joni Mitchell was worse than embarrassing; it was boring. If the Sex Pistols had been around I would have been terrified of all those sharp objects: safety pins, beer bottle shards, mohawk tips. (The one time I tried to go to the Spectrum to see P-Funk, some kid ripped off our tickets at the door. We drove home in gloomy ignominy, a migraine eating Paula in the back seat. It just wasn't meant to be.)

Since I didn't even get what "do bongos" meant, going to one of the epic legendary parties-in-the-woods—so desirable at the time—would have been the ultimate in alienation, of course, but I wanted to go anyway just because no one would ever think of inviting me. I did end up at a few because I was tagging along after my j.d. sister, but to my surprise it wasn't really all that much fun, not exciting, just a bunch of people who

already knew each other doing drugs. Was this having fun? Where's the frisson? Is this all there is to a party? I was just beginning to suspect that everybody else having more fun than me was fiction. What's the deal?

### Getting It

Now, as a professed adult, I refuse to feel deprived and I crave certain activities, i.e., going out to play: playing pinball in loud bars, cruising in the art galleries, seeing bands in dark, cramped venues, just being abroad late and free, running the streets. Or getting rides from my motorcycles-driving friends or getting coffee in the small hours in vinyl-padded booths, doing road trips, anything spur-of-the-moment that's fun just because you never thought of it before. Alone or with. Play here now.

I still love reading old novels and curling up to write in bed, eating ice cream, staying up as late as possible, and I'd still rather be supine in a field somewhere looking at the

constellations than just about anywhere else I can think of, although that's harder to make happen when you live on the Lower East Side. (I can usually spot about 3 stars total between my studio and the subway, and on the way home from the subway, at Bowery & Houston, there's often a spectacular view of the moon, at which I have howled spontaneously once or twice.) But I digress. You learn to have your own real fun as soon as you belong to a club of one, you are a one-woman party, the vessel for all your own pleasure, that the space between your ears is the arena for your own private spectacle of flashing colored lights and loud hard music and speed and joy. You learn you're much more fun than fun is.

Now I like to do practically anything, especially if I haven't tried it yet. Everything can be fun. That's the deal.

**-Giri**

This essay first appeared in issue #2 of "the only zine that lifts and separates." Bust, POB 319 Ansonia Station, NYC, NY 10023. Sample copies are \$2 + two 29¢ stamps. ©1993 by Fran Willing

# Alternative Press REVIEW

YOUR GUIDE BEYOND THE MAINSTREAM

Don't miss future issues!

THE ALTERNATIVE PRESS is beginning to burst out of its ghetto and confront mainstream readers around the world on a scale unheard of since the '60s.

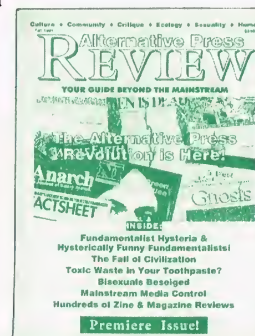
The combination of new print technologies, new radical social currents and the looming crisis of our collective boredom has spawned thousands of new publications. More every day, with no end in sight.

But who can keep up with this explosion? The Alternative Press Review can be your window on the world of the radical press. APR will publish a wide variety of the best essays from radical zines, tabloids, books

and magazines—essays that deserve a much wider readership than they currently enjoy.

Plus, APR will publish a pot-pourri of short and lively article excerpts in each issue, along with reviews, commentary and columns on the alternative press scene, as well as other alternative media. APR will give you the lowdown on the best of the non-authoritarian press. What's out there, what's hot, and where to find it before it's gone.

Subscribe now for \$16/year (four issues). Or subscribe for two years at \$32 and receive a free copy of John Zerzan's important new book, *Future Primitive*, (which has just been released) as well.



## Alternative Press Review Subscription

- ☐ Send me a 1 year subscription for \$16 (add \$6 for first class delivery)
- ☐ Send me a 2 year subscription for \$32 along with a free copy of John Zerzan's *Future Primitive* (add \$12 for first class)
- ☐ Send me a 1 year international subscription for \$24 (by surface mail/airmail add \$8)
- ☐ Send me a 2 year international subscription for \$48 along with a free copy of *Future Primitive* (surface mail/airmail add \$16)

Make your check or money order to: C.A.L. and send it to: C.A.L. Press, POB 1446, Columbia, MO. 65205-1446, U.S.A.

(All subscriptions are in US dollars; checks or money orders in other currencies must add the equivalent to US \$10 for conversion.) Allow one to three months for regular or surface mail delivery; allow one to three weeks for first class or airmail delivery. Subscriptions are unconditionally guaranteed. If you are not completely satisfied, the remainder of your subscription will be refunded.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Country (for international subscriptions) \_\_\_\_\_

APR#3



## A Woman's True Story OF AN HERBAL SELF-ABORTION

I tuned in recently to an interview with a bioethicist on the radio. When the topic turned briefly to abortion, he pointed out that while abortion rights in the United States stand on the implied constitutional right to privacy, women here cannot have truly private abortions. We have our pregnancies terminated in clinics and hospitals. This inevitably involves at least two other people (doctor and assistant), and often dozens. In the end, a woman's private decision to seek an abortion is made dismayingly public, leaving her and those she turns to for care open to judgment, coercion and assault.

The expert's words gave me pause. Not because any of this is new to me—even if I weren't interested, I could not have failed to notice the circuses being staged in front of abortion clinics over the past decade—but because I have had a truly private abortion. I administered it myself, using abortifacient herbs to end an eight-week pregnancy. I did this suspecting it was against the law. I did it not knowing whether I would succeed in aborting.

But why an herbal abortion, when I have access to several abortion clinics, all within an easy drive from my home? The paramount reason was the issue mentioned by the ethicist on the radio: privacy. I wanted not only to exercise my choice to end the pregnancy, I wanted to do it in private. No counselor to convince me that I really did not want an abortion with all my heart. No gauntlet of prying eyes lining the path or bodies blocking the door to the clinic.

In preparation, I studied *Our Bodies, Ourselves* and the information sheets I had gotten from a local clinic. These offered sound advice about how to avoid infection after abortion and how to recognize the warning signs of complications.

Next, I cast about for a source that would tell me which herbs would do the job. Perusing the herb books at a local store, I found not one that listed "abortifacient" in the index (probably to thwart women like me from doing what I was doing). So I worked backwards, looking up herb after herb,

scanning the descriptions for warning against taking this one or that one while pregnant. After I had found a handful of such herbs, I was able to note that each was described as an *emmenagogue*, which I learned means more or less the same as abortifacient. Emmenagogues appeared in every index, and I made a list of those referenced in three books.

Finally, I had to decide on a dosage. Of course, none of the books spelled out a recipe for abortion. The most common prescription for taking medicinal herbs was by infusion, I noticed, so I decided to dose myself with tea made from a combination of herbs several times a day.

I tried to prepare myself for what was in

**"But why an herbal abortion,...? The paramount reason was... privacy. I wanted not only to exercise my choice to end the pregnancy; I wanted to do it in private. No counselor to convince me that I really did not want an abortion with all my heart. No gauntlet of prying eyes lining the path or bodies blocking the door to the clinic."**

store by looking in another book at a drawing of a fetus at eight weeks' gestation. I also tried to think of ways to manage the uncertainty I felt about my experiment. It was important that I felt little uncertainty about my decision to end the pregnancy. On a practical level, though, I had no idea what was going to happen. I had a lot of faith in herbal remedies and in my own judgment. All the same, I wrote down what I was going to take and how much, and I gave the list to my partner for him to give to medical personnel in case I was rendered unable to.

I then commenced to make and drink a foul-tasting tea several times a day. In between doses, I waited. And waited. Having experienced only surgical abortion, which takes maybe five minutes once the doctor is in the room, I was looking for quick results with herbs as well. Unfortunately, herbal remedies simply do not work that way. During the wait I was alternately convinced that my plan was not going to work at all, and that it would kill me.

I had a long time to dwell on my fears: it was 16 days before I saw any results at all—

spotting and light bleeding. After two days of that, the bleeding became heavier. Cramping set in, and I began to worry that I was bleeding too much. A call to a local clinic (I told them I was having a miscarriage) reassured me; the volunteer said my condition didn't sound too serious. To my relief, she didn't order me to seek medical treatment.

On the 18th day, the cramping and bleeding became very intense, making me take frequent trips to the bathroom. At about midday, as I sat in a stall, I felt a violent cramp, and passed what I took to be placenta and fetal tissue. I got through the rest of the day shakily, feeling alternately thrilled that I had done it, and tired and upset.

Two more days of blood and worry followed what I had thought was the end. Then on the 20th day, the pain in my abdomen reached an intense new high. I rushed to the bathroom and was shocked when a tiny embryo slipped out of my body into the

toilet. Forgetting the pictures of fetal development I had looked at, I had convinced myself that the tissue I had passed a few days earlier was the complete pregnancy.

I experienced few physical after-effects from my home abortion. Bleeding stopped within 24 hours after the abortion was complete. I had a regular menstrual cycle and period at the usual interval. There was no illness, no infection. But emotionally, there were far-reaching repercussions. I struggled to assimilate the knowledge I had acquired and to cope with the huge rush of feelings I had about my experience. For about six months, my relationship with my partner frayed under the strain of my feeling that I had gone through this taxing ordeal while he had gone through nothing.

I think now that these rather commonplace post-abortion feelings were magnified by the fact that I performed the abortion myself. The doubt I felt over whether my method would succeed exacerbated the strain that comes with any unplanned pregnancy, and the secrecy I felt I needed to keep led to alienation when I needed support from other

**"I don't regret my abortion, nor...the method I chose."**

**Still, I don't feel that herbal abortion is for every woman...I am now more committed than ever to protecting access to licensed abortion providers. I believe women should be allowed to choose the added burdens, the risk and uncertainty, of home abortion, but I do not believe limited access to professional care should force them to shoulder these burdens."**

people. Most importantly, my home abortion forced me to confront the one great fact of pregnancy: the living thing inside. On the one hand, it was clear that the fetus I aborted was not a baby. On the other hand, it was equally clear that it would have been, had I let it.

According to the testimony of many anti-choice women, this discovery should have resulted in a conversion experience, from which I would emerge a pro-life warrior, regretful of ending the pregnancies I have ended and committed to preventing other women from making the same "mistake." That is not the result in my case. Certainly there were times in the months following my abortion when, unable to manage the anger I felt towards my partner, my failed birth control, myself, the world, I was tempted to blame abortion for my unhappiness. In the end, that turned out to be too ready, too simple, too concrete a scapegoat for my complex feelings. I don't regret my abortion, nor do I regret most things about the method I chose.

Still, I don't feel that herbal abortion is for every woman. For one thing, because no studies have been done, long-term health risks are unknown. For another thing, although I wanted privacy, I cannot discount

the added emotional stress of aborting in secret. In a clinic, counseling is available, partners may be present, and there is a number to call if anything unexpected happens once you get home. I placed myself in the position of having little support.

I am now more committed than ever to protecting access to licensed abortion providers. I believe women should be allowed to choose the added burdens, the risk and

uncertainty, of home abortion, but I do not believe limited access to professional care should force them to shoulder these burdens.

**-Jane Call (a pseudonym)**

Note: Taking herbal preparations without extensive knowledge of their properties and the signs of toxic reaction may be dangerous or fatal.

This essay first appeared in the November 1993 issue of the bimonthly newsletter *Choosing Choice*, POB 190715, San Francisco, CA 94119. Subscriptions are \$20.00/year. ©1993 by Choosing Choice

### CULTURAL JETLAG—JIM SIERGEY & TOM ROBERTS

**CREATED IN THE BASEMENT OF THE WOMYN'S STUDIES BUILDING BY A CABAL OF PROFESSORS OF COLOR, ALTERNATIVE SEXUAL ORIENTATION, AND LEFTIST POLITICAL PERSUASION, THE MONSTER SETS FORTH TO BRING THE "PALE PENIS PEOPLE" UNDER SUBMISSION AND PROMOTE A MULTI-CULTURAL CURRICULUM AND POLITICALLY CORRECT THOUGHT! THE CREATURE IS CALLED...**



**MUFFY AND BIF, CO-EDITORS OF THE UNIVERSITY'S NEO-CONSERVATIVE STUDENT NEWSPAPER WATCH IN HORROR FROM A WINDOW IN THE BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION DEPT...**

**THE MONSTER SEEMS TO BE EMITTING SOME SORT OF HYPNOTIC BEAM, TURNING THE ENTIRE SILENT BODY INTO SLOGANEERING SENSITIVITY-TRAINED P.C. ZOMBIES!**

**IT'S ALREADY TAKEN OVER THE HUMANITIES DEPT! THE HALLS OF ACADEME ARE CRUMBLING ALL AROUND US!**

**MAYBE THERE'S STILL TIME TO RE-INSTALL WESTERN VALUES, GIVE ME THE BULLHORN!**

**FELLOW STUDENTS, THE CLASSICS ARE NOT DEAD! GO BACK TO THE CURRICULUM THAT HAS PRESERVED WESTERN CIVILIZATION! RETURN TO THE STATUS QUO! ASSIMILATE BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!**

**CAN MUFFY AND BIF MAKE A STAND AGAINST A RISING TIDAL WAVE OF BLACK AND WOMYN'S STUDIES PROGRAMS, OR WILL AMERICA'S CAMPUSES SUBMIT TO A CULTURAL REVOLUTION?**



## The Feminist Mistake A RESPONSE TO KATIE ROIPHE'S THE MORNING AFTER: Sex, Fear and Feminism on Campus

Criticism from a well-meaning friend or colleague—an "insider"—stings, but is generally respected and accepted. Criticism from an "outsider," however, makes one bristle—and is more easily perceived as an attack. *Why should I listen to her? What does she really know, anyway?* Such has largely been the feminist response to Katie Roiphe's denunciation of what she calls "rape crisis" feminism—that is, the feminist faction, most visible on college campuses, that defines rape expansively and promotes the belief that all men are natural aggressors. Her thesis is that these feminists are doing a disservice to women by implicitly characterizing themselves as victims in all sexual scenarios.

Roiphe's relation to feminism frames the issue: she simultaneously embraces both outsider and insider status. Because she writes with an air of objectivity, she is able to marshal public cultural discourse through speaking engagements and news show stints. At the same time, her youth and student status lend credibility to her eyewitness accounts of campus feminism in a way that most "objective" reporters can rarely achieve.

As a result, the news media can barely contain their excitement: Roiphe both critiques feminism and castigates the irresponsibility of twentysomethings—an irresistible combination. *Newsweek's* "Sexual Correctness" issue devoted nine pages to the subject. The editors mapped the argument in terms of one-dimensional yes-or-no questions (is Roiphe liberal or conservative? brilliant or misguided?), and rounded up knee-jerk pundits to advance each side. Susan Faludi categorically dismissed Roiphe, Mary Matalin embraced her, and the editors desperately tried to maintain an even-handed tone.

Roiphe's portrayal of feminism is itself one-dimensional, a caricature of a monolith—fearful and movement that lacks

internal dissent. Roiphe ignores the thousands of campus feminists who do engage positively with issues of sexuality—for example, those who are primarily devoted to pro-choice activism. And they, in turn, have dismissed her as reactionary.

Nonetheless, to conclude that raising the issue of sexual correctness is just another example of anti-feminist backlash is a serious mistake. Roiphe has nudged us to examine the mechanisms of feminist orthodoxy, exposing its paradoxical foundation through anecdotes and interviews with feminists at

**"Catharine MacKinnon exemplifies the hyperbole par excellence. Roiphe cites her: 'Politically, I call it rape whenever the woman feels violated.' By this definition, any sexual encounter a woman is unhappy about becomes rape, and the concept becomes diluted to the point that it becomes almost meaningless."**

various colleges.

Many of her stories resonate with my own experience. I was an undergraduate at Brown University when the notorious "rape list" appeared on a bathroom wall. You may remember reading about the list several years ago in *The New York Times*. When it first appeared, I was working as a research assistant for a professor on the second floor of the Rockefeller Library. It was hot and my work was slow-paced; between the air conditioning and the coffee, I became well acquainted with the women's bathroom.

At first there was just a single name inside the door of the second stall on the left side: "X is a rapist. Report the animal." Over the course of the summer, a few more names were added, with similar warnings. In September the list swelled. By November, there were at least 30 names. The administration discovered it and ordered that the door be freshly painted. The list reappeared, the anger of its authors impossible to miss. "Quit erasing this list!" "Why is this list the only graffiti on campus routinely washed away?" The door was painted again; the list ap-

peared again. Everyone seemed to know someone on it. My friends and I whispered about the names. "Is it true about Y?" "Don't go out with Z."

But something happened to the character of the list as it expanded. Harassers and assaulters began to be lumped in with rapists. It wasn't clear who had done what. "Did he rape her, or just pinch her?" Feel her up? Make a rude comment?" The definition of "rape" so wide that it even included day-to-day sexism that, while by no means innocent or forgivable, was not a threat to anyone's physical safety.

A close friend of mine, ironically one of the most feminist men I know, was deemed dangerous because on one occasion he made an awkward and intrusive pass at his date at a party. Although he was rebuffed and went no further, his name was added to the top 10 list of men to watch out for. This in itself was humiliating and unjust; but it was not-

ing compared to what followed. My friend's accuser took her complaint of sexual assault to Brown's internal judicial organization, which ultimately decided that there was not enough evidence for a disciplinary council hearing. Nevertheless, he was named as a sexual assaulter on the front page of the *Brown Daily Herald*. His social life was irreparably crippled for the duration of his study at Brown.

Lest one argue that the extremism of some feminists at Brown was singular and unduplicated, consider the proliferating sexual conduct codes at colleges across the country—the most publicized one at Antioch College in Ohio, which insists upon "clear verbal consent" not just for sexual intercourse but for all other sexual acts, including kissing. Consider the popularity of anti-pornography feminism, an attempt to "save" women from male lust.

Consider, finally, the many recent publications that establish guidelines to avoid rape. They argue that women must protect themselves, in all social encounters with men, from a constant threat of assault. In one

recent book, *Date Rape: The Secret Epidemic*, the authors counsel, "Avoid allowing a man to touch or get too close before the relationship has developed very far." And rebels are out as well: "Avoid men who disregard laws and established rules. Men who knowingly break laws and behave without regard for the rights of others are at risk for doing the same sexually." (Unlike women, I presume, who are better able to limit anti-establishment impulses to non-sexual acts.)

Feminist preoccupation with the dangers of male sexuality has not, of course, emerged out of nowhere. During the Progressive era, suffragettes often relied in their rhetoric upon 19th-century stereotypes of female asexuality and male sexual immorality. A similar wariness returned in the second wave of feminist activism in the '60s and '70s. In 1974, Robin Morgan proposed in her famous article "Theory and Practice: Pornography and Rape" that "[r]ape exists any time sexual intercourse occurs when it has not been initiated by the woman, out of her own genuine affection and desire...It might not be a knife-blade against her throat; it can be in his body language, his threat of sulking, his clenched or trembling hands, his angry put-down or silent self-pity at being rejected." Sulking? Trembling hands? Silent self-pity? These ploys are manipulative, but hardly overpowering, and they are definitely not the sole province of men.

Catharine MacKinnon exemplifies the hyperbole par excellence. Roiphe cites her: "Politically, I call it rape whenever the woman feels violated." By this definition, any sexual encounter a woman is unhappy about becomes rape, and the concept becomes diluted to the point that it becomes almost meaningless.

Why do the arguments of this feminist faction have so much resonance with young women today? For one thing, the reductionist model of gender oppression helps to promote a sense of feminist community by obscuring differences among women. By theorizing that men and male institutions have a monopoly on domination and violence, "rape crisis" feminists elide the shameful truth that many women are complicit in keeping other women down. Despite a popular feminist belief that women's leadership style is inherently collaborative and intuitive—in contrast to a presumed "male" style of greed, hierarchy and self-interest—women in positions of authority can be just as exploitative as men. The fact is that in a society predicated on the

unequal distribution of limited resources, violence and power manipulation would exist even if women were to win the mythic battle of the sexes.

The feminist sense of sisterhood is not entirely illusory, of course. Young women do share similar concerns—among them very real concerns about rape. The risk of rape is four times higher for women aged 16 to 24 than for any other group. Half of all men arrested for rape are 24 years old or younger. And a quarter of all male college students in the United States and Canada admitted in a 1984 study that they would rape a woman if they could get away with it.

That there is a problem is not in doubt. The question is what to do about it. To my mind, the most fruitful approach would be to analyze the sources of male rape in order to try to eliminate it—a complicated endeavor that will not yield any easy answers. Blaming men and masculinity categorically, on the other hand, is a quick-fix solution, reminiscent of the way self-described "codependents" blame all their problems on their dysfunctional families. Not only does such an approach demonize many of our partners and friends, but it also stunts our own sense of self-determination and agency.

Like their close cousins, anti-pornography feminists, "rape crisis" feminists generate activism through personal testimony, a rhetorical device that provides the speaker with a moral high ground. The testimony demonstrates the danger of male sexual violence in a way that is nearly impossible to refute without appearing insensitive or even anti-feminist. The subjective experience of an assaulted woman (a "survivor," in vocabulary borrowed from the self-help movement) becomes the highest truth; it becomes emblematic of the experiences of all women. This is an ironic tactic. In the '70s, white, middle-class feminists were criticized for universalizing their problems. This new crop of feminists tends to lack a sense of that history, and so have fallen into the same trap.

But orthodoxies cannot live on moral superiority alone. The pedantic discourse of *Take Back the Night* marches and open-mike forums belies an admirably savvy understanding of how feminist voices get heard in a moment when feminism is not taken seriously by most people, including women. (Only 33 percent of women embrace the term "feminist," according to a recent poll.) Unable to drum up media attention (or even much campus activism) over issues of eco-

nomic and social inequality, campus feminists have discovered that sexual crisis is a certain attention grabber.

Young women today have very legitimate reasons to feel angry, anxious and afraid about their futures. If they are heterosexual, the choices of when or whether to marry or to have children will have impact on their career in a way that men's choices do not. College women soon discover that despite many advances in the 25 years since the emergence of the second wave of feminism, sexism still pervades the workplace. Nearly 75 percent of full-time working women, for example, earn less than \$20,000 a year, compared to 37 percent of men. And even though active fatherhood is purportedly on the rise, active male homemaking is not: women do 70 percent of the housework, even when employed full time outside the home.

Old patterns therefore inevitably repeat themselves. Married women who decide to have children tend to choose careers with flexible hours, or stay home with a child its first few years. And rather than providing substantive analysis about the delicate balancing act between career and family, liberal feminism has told women simply that they can "have it all"—that, in fact, they *must* have it all.

With such an onus, is it any wonder that some young women might sublimate their fears about the future into a kind of sexual hysteria? Unconsciously, the "rape crisis" activists seek to prolong a state of dependence. By expansively defining rape and pointing to male sexuality as the essence of sexist oppression, rape crisis feminists characterize themselves as vulnerable prey, thereby abrogating responsibility for their actions.

Finally, here is a feminist dilemma for which step-by-step guidelines can be crafted and to which college administrators, even reporters, listen. Rape crisis feminists, then, may be regarded as radicals who are contesting the expectations of liberal feminism, which has placed a heavy burden on their shoulders—and told them they should be grateful for it.

—Leora Tanenbaum

©1993 Leora Tanenbaum. This essay first appeared in the Dec. 13, 1993 issue (Vol.18, #2) of *In These Times*, 1912 Debs Avenue, Mt. Morris, IL 61054.



## The Clowns

### RUNNING AMOK IN LOS ANGELES

I am Asswipe the Clown. I do birthdays, bar mitzvahs, bowling tournaments, blowjobs, bank robberies, dog shows, your mother. I got the runs, real bad. Just 'cause I smell, doesn't mean you don't smell. I often commit crimes with a friend named Chuckles the Clown. He'll kick your ass. Sometimes we hang out in a gang of clowns and attack office buildings.

Rumor has it that scary, foam rubber clown costumes from the movie "Killer Klowns from Outer Space" were liberated from a storage warehouse that was going to throw them away and they came into my possession.

We went downtown to Bunker Hill. There was a clown on a crutch, a fucked up looking elf, a monster and a clown in a tutu who threw up chocolate syrup. I have a green mohawk, an eye wound that's pretty much sealed up one eye, a big fuckin' honker and big hands and you know what that means. Heh, heh. We got up in the office building at the California Plaza before security could catch up with us, went right up to a random floor and there was a boardroom meeting going on behind a plate glass window. I ran right in there and said, "Where's John? It's his birthday. We're here to sing him happy birthday. Don't be shy John. Where are ya?" We sang him our mutated version of "Happy Birthday" whether he was there or not as Ballerina Clown gave all the executives a big hug and they freaked out and didn't laugh because something about this didn't seem right or funny.

Security finally caught up with us and the birthday scam worked and they said maybe John was in the other building and escorted us down what I assume was the secret celebrity elevator.

I guess it's possible that the one weird guy at the office might actually hire a gang of twisted clowns for someone's birthday, so that's always a good alibi for sneaking into anywhere as clowns. But there are others. My favorite is "Hi. We're from 'Heal L.A.' sponsored by L.A. Cultural Affairs and we're trying to spread the message that we all need

to come together and make this city the paradise it once was." People believe this. Security guards believe this. We in no way promote tolerance, harmony or pride in our city. We are the criminal element that should be behind bars, hoods, lowlifes, circus drop-outs.

I told 200 or so suit and ties on this particular day to "remember to masturbate, because it's Christmas time." Some smiled. Some pretended not to notice or sped off. All went home and whacked off screaming like banshees with their pants around their ankles because the clown said so. We went to MOCHA, the museum of modern art, maybe my least favorite museum in L.A. The ticket woman thought we were funny so she gave us all free passes and I hope she still has a job. So we ran around the museum. I questioned all the patrons and the security

**"Sometimes we hang out in a gang of clowns and attack office buildings. Rumor has it that scary, foam rubber clown costumes from the movie 'Killer Klowns from Outer Space' were liberated from a storage warehouse that was going to throw them away and they came into my possession."**

guards and tried to get someone to admit that most of the art sucked. "Look at this. Whatever happened to Van Gogh? Now that was art. My dead monkey could paint better than this. Let's find the guy who did this and give him a knuckle sandwich." There were 10 security guards following around the clowns telling us to be quiet and to stop running around, but they wouldn't kick us out. So imagine you're some guy, you really like art, you're really into it and you're staring intently at this piece. Maybe you're thinking about what the artist was trying to convey or what it means to you and you notice there's a giant, scary clown at your check staring at you and making uncomfortable swallowing noises. That's clowns at the art museum. Fuck art. Be clowns.

There were about 40 or so Japanese tourists and security guards looking at us and Foo Foo the Clown whipped out his harmonica and played one note and I grumbled/sang "I'm a clown." We did that about 10 times and I said "play that other

one," and Foo Foo played another note and I sang again, "I'm a clown," and the tourists nodded in approval. Later we were in Chinatown and there were these cages outside packed with chickens and Chuckles opened one of the cages and the man said, "no, no open cage," and shut it on the chicken's neck.

On Halloween I decided to be a clown and went to West Hollywood where they close off the streets and the drag queens go all out and wear tables on their heads. I did a prank where I laid in the middle of the street rolling around and making vomit noises and just expected people to step around me. But through my clown eye slits I saw a big circle of people gather around. "I think that clown had too much to drink."

I thought, "It's a costume you idiots." Someone concerned came over.

"Are you alright?"

"I'm joking."

So I got up so no one would call an ambulance and people were disappointed that I was not really a drunken, vomiting clown. So

I went and did it again.

On my birthday we went to the Pleasure Chest, a sex shop emporium and tried out dildos. Clowns in sex store. Picture. Funny. We went to the Living Room, a horrible coffeehouse. The door guy wouldn't let me in when I said we were there to commit crimes...then I said drink overpriced coffee. Chuckles had a plan for the three of us to lock ourselves in the bathroom and laugh maniacally. But the doorguy caught us and said only one at a time in the bathroom. I asked him if he had any bad childhood experiences with clowns. Chuckles was a schizophrenic clown rubbing his pumpkin erotically and talking to it. Some lughead threatened to beat him up. As we were leaving, the doorguy kicked us out. Then we went to the thriftstore and asked if they had any of those new, grunge clothes because we wanted to look like Pearl Jam.

Then we went to the Scientology building, which used to be the hospital where I was born. I explained to the evil woman that "it's

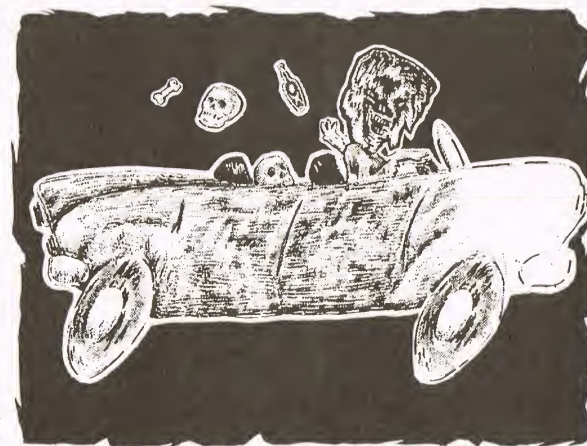
my birthday and this is where I was born and well...we were going out tonight and we were up to no good. We were going to commit crimes, but we saw your sign that said 'Come On In.' So we thought maybe you could help us out." I kept wandering into the room where they were having a meeting and they'd laugh and the devil woman with the baby pushed me out. I wanted to know where Jon Travolta, noted celebrity Scientologist was, but they couldn't find him. They offered us personality tests and we'd played that bit before so we ran screaming.

So we saw this well-dressed hitchhiker and pulled around a corner and came back and picked him up with a plan. Chuckles was driving and was laughing like a psychopath. "So I'm on PCP, but this guy here driving, he's fine." I asked him questions and said, "Yeah, we were gonna snuff this guy out tonight, but we thought we'd pick you up first." He only wanted to go a few blocks. I think we made his year. He said that he didn't think anyone would believe that this happened to him. We went to the Onyx Coffeehouse with a styrofoam cup and asked for spare change for a nosey job for me, which later turned into...our VW bug broke down and we have 12 clowns waiting and we need some gas money and we got \$6.00 in 20 minutes.

So the clowns against commerce invaded Century City and we went into the Fox Building where my friend works. I got deep into the back cubicles in this lawyers' firm, which is the last place in the world anyone expects to be attacked by a mean clown. "I'll take that call, that's for me," I said as I grappled with a lawyer for his phone. The guy waved pathetically and whispered no, that it was a very important call. The floor manager told my friend Elizabeth that she had to get the clowns out of the office because there were clients coming.

So we went to the Century City Mall and went into Victoria Secret, a lingerie store where I yelled "Changing room checks," asked the woman behind the counter if she would try something on for me if I tried

something on for her and informed customers that the fragrances they were sampling were tested on clowns. We went into a shoestore and I asked if I could get a pair of shoes with the rest of the cow attached. I asked businessmen if I could borrow their ties for a job interview I was late to. We went into The Gap and asked if we could speak to Henry Rollins and mentioned that



Mark Neville

the clothes were lacking in clownness. We went into the Imaginarium, a toy store I used to work in and Ballerina Clown had a tantrum in the children's playground and cried and screamed "Daddy, I have to have this toy. I'm not leaving!" until we dragged her out. Most of the stores put up with us. But the Disney store was totally rude and offended Ballerina Clown and then the mall security guard told us that some customers had been complaining that we were harassing them and that we would have to leave. He said that if it was his choice he'd let us stay, but his supervisor would get angry. He turned out to be quite friendly and hung out with us. He had the eyes for Ballerina Clown and told us that his penis was thick and long like his nightstick and that he was getting married the next day.

...I got as close as I'm ever going to get to the mayor's office when we went to City Hall as clowns. Ballerina Clown danced around with one of the transit bureaucrats. We went to the mayor's office and I told the security guard that we were from the town of Chucklesville and wanted to become sister

cities with L.A. and could we please see Mayor Bradley. He said we had to have an appointment. We got him to go fetch an 8 1/2 x 11 glossy picture of Bradley and while he was talking to the other clowns I held it over my face and got right up to his office and pretending I was Bradley asked people if they thought I'd been doing a good job running the city. Now you have to picture a

giant headed clown wandering outside the mayor's office holding in his huge hands a picture of Bradley's head over his face pretending that he's the mayor and greeting confused people. Funny. Funny. The nice security guard asked me to leave and an evil, demonic, bureaucrat started yelling at us and said that this is a place of business and that we were being unbusinesslike and I said that she was lucky and that usually we bring horns and poodles. I did the Bradley picture over my face thing to about 30 people and most of them said I was doing a fine job. A few said it was

time for me to leave and two drunk, Hispanic, maybe homeless guys outside city hall said, "Is that really Bradley in there?"

We went to Woo's office and I had the Bradley picture over my face and said I wanted to give him an endorsement, but he wasn't around. So I asked all the women in his office if he sexually harassed them....

I went to the evil, disco clown night at the club Fuzzlyland and Piero, the Modern Primitive Clown, the Clown Dominatrix, who got me all hot and bothered, and a whole slew of other painted-faced goons who escaped from the San Quentin Circus were boogying around and I dreamed of creating an army of super villains and tormenting the masses at city events and spreading evil and filth and balloon animals and you may see us around and you may join us or you may spurn us and you may open your door someday and see a rubber nose and smell whiskey breath and catch a cream pie in your face.

**-Adam Bregman**

This essay first appeared in issue #3 of the hilariously subversive zine, *Shit Happy*, c/o Adam Bregman, 11338 Joffe St., LA, CA 90049. Sample copies are \$2.



## Redefining the Radical PC AS MEDIA SCARE & TRANSLATION

The media assault on Political Correctness which reached its peak in the U.S. during 1991, shares many characteristics with other scares of recent years, such as those over serial killers or ritual child abuse. It was manufactured, both in the U.S. and to a lesser extent in the U.K., through an organized media campaign into the latest epidemic of evil to threaten innocence, freedom and civilization as we know it.

### Now the Enemy is Within

An article in the journal *Propaganda Review* dates the origin of the attack on PC to a memo circulated amongst the academic Right which:

"...suggested 'high-ground articulation,' that is, thoroughly re-framing issues so that the right would no longer be seen as the champions of bigots and exclusion."<sup>1</sup>

The Bush administration, allied with conservative academics and the media, were able to project those unappealing characteristics—authoritarianism, intolerance, narrow-mindedness, etc.—with which they would normally be charged, onto the academic left. Now casting themselves in the role of guardians of free speech and the protectors of innocence, the right charged the left with being enemies of freedom, and then, as the campaign gathered pace and broadened from academic debate to public propaganda, with totalitarianism, fascism and, most significantly in terms of its strategy of projection, with McCarthyite witch-hunts.

In its initial stages, however, the case against PC was articulated around concerns over the entrenchment of radicals within academe who were bent on discarding the great traditions of disinterested pursuit of truth and knowledge, and replacing them with narrow and negative interpretations of Western culture in terms of race, class and gender. Many articles took their cue from key texts such as Roger Kimball's *Tenured Radicals* and Dinesh D'Souza's *Illiberal Education* and significantly both of these

were funded by right wing organizations (Kimball's by the American Enterprise Institute, and D'Souza's by the John Olin Foundation). Referring to fears of the "enemy within" Kimball wrote:

"Yesterday's student radical is today's tenured professor or academic dean...the radical vision of the sixties has not so much been abandoned as internalized by many who came of age then and who now teach and administer our institutions of higher education."<sup>2</sup>

Like all good scares the PC scare had its innocent victims and evil perpetrators. Numerous tales of professors silenced, or hounded out of universities, by rabid PCers

**"What this newly defined field marks is the terminus of the movement from economic reductionism to textual reductionism. How convenient for 'radical' cultural critics to conclude that only their own fields of specialization are worthy of attention and that real social action can be abandoned, without bad conscience, to the less enlightened and naive."**

for breaking "restrictive" speech codes, circulated throughout the U.S. media. These stories summoned up images of PC stormtroopers patrolling the halls of academe using unjust accusations of racism and sexism to silence those who failed to comply with their ideological dogma. Like all good scares, this impression was built more on lies, hype and "just the tip of the iceberg" rhetoric than on the small number of actually verified cases of PC's restrictive practices.

Of course, concerns over academic freedoms and the plight of professors don't stir up much fear or anxiety for those outside the university walls. So, as the campaign was spread to the wider public, the anti-PC rhetoric became more hysterical, using the random selection of any convenient and obvious symbol of evil and oppression to characterize PC. Both the *Atlantic Monthly* and *The New York Times* carried features on PC accompanied by images of book-burning Hitler Youth, while another article quoting Stephen Thernstrom warns:

"This is a new McCarthyism. It's more frightening than the old McCarthyism, which

had no support in the academy. Now the enemy is within. There are students and faculty who have no belief in freedom of speech."<sup>3</sup>

Through this kind of rhetoric PC was articulated as a threat to the public at large implying that what happens in academe today will happen to us all tomorrow. This strategy is most neatly exemplified in the frequently used question "Are you politically correct?" invoking a fear of ideological dogma and implying that we are all, or soon will be, subject to its orthodoxy.

The attempt to remodel language in terms of political correctness provided PC's opposition with an opportunity to ridicule the new euphemisms like "animal companion" ("pet") or "vertically challenged" ("short"), while simultaneously creating fears about interference with "our" language and threats to "freedom of speech."

At the peak of the PC scare President

Bush made his contribution stating:

"...the notion of political correctness...declares certain topics off-limits, certain expressions off-limits."<sup>4</sup>

What we actually see behind the anti-PC rhetoric is an attempt by the right itself to "declare certain topics off-limits"—namely racism, sexism and class, or any other reference to systems of exploitation and oppression, under penalty of being tarred with the PC brush as totalitarian-communist-fascist.

The response of the left to this assault has been mixed. While exposing the right's hidden agenda some have claimed that PC is merely a media construction, i.e. "there is nothing to be scared of," while others affirm its existence and make claims for its radicalism, i.e. "there is something (for the right) to be scared of. If PC was nothing but a figment of the right's invective there would be no need to explore this topic further. But as the academic left would like to see itself as "more than merely academic" we do need to examine such pretensions to radicalism, not least to understand how its practices enable the right to present themselves in a

position of relative tolerance.

### Translating the Radical

Although the majority of its practitioners, especially following the PC scare, would avoid the label "PC," there continues to exist a firm belief by sections of the academic left and other middle class professionals, in the idea that by using strategies such as politically correct speech and "positive" media images the inequalities and oppression on which capitalism is built can be overcome.

This belief has its origins in a broad left-intellectual current of this century which has placed an emphasis on attempting to analyze and understand the role of culture, or, in Marxist terms the superstructure, in reproducing capitalism, attempting a more sophisticated analysis than the vulgar Marxist economic reductionism of the base-determined model. This current examined the roles of cultural apparatuses such as the media, education, the family and language, as carriers of a naturalized bourgeois ideology that could be unmasked, or demystified, by radical intellectuals using the techniques of critical theory.

Semiotics occupied a key position in this current as a theoretical practice which promised to analyze culture and cultural products as signifying systems which placed the spectators and consumers in their subject positions, of "working man," "housewife," "patriot," etc. within ideology. Semiotics and structuralism sought to analyze features of capitalism such as racism, sexism and class domination in terms of cultural codes, structures and discourses which, while on the surface appearing to be "natural" or "common sense," could, through acts of decoding, be made to reveal their historically constructed ideological essence and thus be challenged.

The disillusionment that followed the failure of the student and workers' uprisings of 1968 prompted an even more fundamental questioning of the traditional Marxist framework in which these intellectuals had operated. With post-structuralism the cultural codes of language, discourse and text were understood to refer only to each other in an endless chain of signifiers, without having any reference to a fixed reality or signified beyond the text. Power was understood to be dispersed through a fragmented network of these discourses, of race, sex, patriarchy, etc., in ways which undermined the possibility of conceptualizing capital as a totality of exploi-

tation and traditional notions of class struggle as a means to bring about its downfall.

If the situationists had complained of the alienation caused in a world where "real life" had been negated and replaced in the mediated form of spectacle, then post-structuralists, and later post-modernists, would argue that there is no "real life" or genuine "human nature," to be alienated from: the only reality is the reality of the spectacle.

It is important to understand that theorists and academics, like Foucault, Baudrillard and Lyotard, while rejecting the concepts of orthodox Marxism, class struggle and revolution, saw themselves, and came to be seen, as more advanced, critical and radical than those still trapped within these now passé mindsets. They were not disavowing their claims to radicalism, but redefining, or transplanting it into their own terms, terms which now privileged the status of those doing the translation as experts in the newly defined field. What this newly defined field marks is the terminus of the movement from economic reductionism to textual reductionism. How convenient for "radical" cultural critics to conclude that only their own fields of specialization are worthy of attention and that real social action can be abandoned, without bad conscience, to the less enlightened and naive. All this allows these specialists to underwrite their ideas and practices with the authority of being truly radical and therefore entitled to engage in its professional management.

Since, in the realm of textual reductionism, little, if anything, exists beyond text, discourse and language, and these discourses are all-pervasive and responsible for producing, and reproducing, oppression and inequality, it is these discourses which need to be challenged and changed: a change of language which will change people and their social relations.

In practice this takes the form of the advocacy of politically correct reformulation of language by sections of academe and in areas of social work, together with calls for "positive images" of minority and oppressed groups within the mass media. In redefining the radical these professionals are able to redefine what constitutes radical activity, in this case, action by an enlightened professional sector on behalf of the oppressed, justified by their own discourses of professionalism and expertise.

Aside from the obvious vanguardism of such practices there are numerous criticisms

to be made of PC, and the ideas it originates from. These would include the abandonment of ideas of class struggle and the failure to realize how different facets of oppression actually connect as a totality in capitalism. But we might look here, briefly, at two major criticisms of the PC approach.

Firstly, the kind of discourse theory associated with this approach sees individuals as simply produced by, and within, dominant discourses of, for example, race, gender and nationality, and allows little notion of a human agency capable of sidestepping, or challenging, dominant ideological discourses. This ignores the many ways these discourses are critically subverted, or rearticulated. For example, the use by radical gay and lesbian groups of apparently abusive terms like "queer" or "dyke" shows how language can be appropriated in far more subversive and dynamic ways than the professional management of language attempted by PC.

Secondly, the argument for "positive images" is one which can easily serve the interests of those who wish to maintain the existing order of things. If everyone is represented, as image, within the media spectacle, then nobody can be said to be outside or excluded. Capital can present itself as catering for all, at the level of appearances, while in social reality the conditions which perpetuate oppression continue. Demands for representation are far more easily met and incorporated into capital than demands for an end to the conditions it produces.

Culture is an important area of struggle but how we do so is crucial. We should not hand over the responsibility for this struggle to a professional vanguard of cultural specialists who, while arguing for politically correct language happily inhabit institutions which help to perpetuate social inequality. Apart from its other failings, this strategy has allowed the right to characterize all radicals as the enemies of freedom.

—Douglas Spencer

### Notes:

1. Gary Grass, "Black Hats for the Politically Correct," *Propaganda Review* No. 8.
2. Cited by Bruce Robbins, "Tenured Radicals, the New McCarthyism, and 'PC,'" *New Left Review* No. 188, July/August 1991.
3. John Taylor, "Are You Politically Correct?" *Literary Review* March 1991.
4. Cited by Alexander Cockburn, "Bush and PC—A Conspiracy so Immense..." *The Nation* May 1991.
5. Bruce Robbins, *op. cit.*

This essay first appeared in issue #14 of the magazine *Here and Now*, c/o Transmission Gallery, 28 King Street, Glasgow G1 5QP, Scotland; or POB 108, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS5 3AA, England. Subscriptions are £4.00 by surface mail.





# Time Bombs

Noam Chomsky

*Why the new global economy will trigger more explosions like Chiapas.*



major changes in the global order over the past quarter-century have led to a huge increase in unregulated financial capital and a radical shift in its use, from long-term investment and trade to speculation.

The effect has been to undermine national economic planning as governments are compelled to preserve market "credibility," driving economies toward what Cambridge University economist John Eatwell calls "a low-growth, high-unemployment equilibrium," with declining real wages, increasing poverty and inequality for the many, and profits for the few.

The parallel process of internationalization of production provides multinational corporations with new weapons to undermine working people in the West. Workers must now accept an end to their "luxurious" lifestyles and agree to "flexibility of labor markets" (*i.e.*, not knowing whether you have a job tomorrow). The return of most of Eastern Europe to its Third World origins enhances these prospects considerably. The attack on worker rights, social standards and functioning democracy reflects this new economic order. So does the current recovery in the United States—the first one in which wages are declining for most of the workforce, inequality is increasing, unemployment is scarcely changing and more than a quarter of new jobs are provided by temporary help agencies (one of which is now the nation's largest private employer,

"Time Bombs" analyzes the direction currently taken by contemporary market forces as they accelerate environmental degradation and social decomposition through mechanisms like NAFTA and GATT, inevitably creating the context for a new eruption of the dispossessed around the world. Noam Chomsky is a well-known professor of linguistics, a prolific author and tireless U.S. foreign policy critic, who contributes to a wide range of alternative press periodicals, including *In These Times*. *In These Times* is a fortnightly left-liberal alternative newsmagazine now in its 18th year of publication. This essay has been reprinted from the Feb. 21, 1993 issue of *In These Times*. Subscriptions are \$34.95 per year (26 issues) from *In These Times* Customer Service, 1912 Debs Ave., Mt. Morris, IL 61054.

Reprinted with permission.  
©1994 by Noam Chomsky

Mark Neville



Fortune magazine reports).

The triumphalism among narrow elite sectors is quite understandable, as is the mounting despair and anger outside privileged circles.

The New Year's Day uprising of Indian peasants in Chiapas can be seen in this general context. The uprising coincided with the enactment of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The Zapatista army called NAFTA a "death sentence" for Indians, a gift to the rich that will deepen the divide between narrowly concentrated wealth and mass misery, destroying what remains of their indigenous society.

The NAFTA connection is partly symbolic; the problems are far deeper. "We are the product of 500 years of struggle," the Zapatista "declaration of war" stated. The struggle today is "for work, land, housing, food, health care, education, independence, freedom, democracy, justice and peace."

The Indian peasants are the most aggrieved victims of government policies. But their distress is widely shared. "Anyone who has the opportunity to be in contact with the millions of Mexicans who live in extreme poverty knows that

affluent sectors in Mexico at the expense of the general population. Malnutrition became a major health problem, agricultural employment declined, productive lands were abandoned and Mexico began to import massive amounts of food. Real wages in manufacturing fell sharply. Labor's share in gross domestic product, which had risen until the mid-70s, has since declined by well over a third.

These are standard concomitants of neoliberal reforms. IMF studies show "a strong and consistent pattern of reduction of labor share of income" under the impact of its "stabilization programs" in Latin America, economist Manuel Pastor observes.

The Mexican secretary of commerce hailed the fall in wages as an inducement to foreign investors. So it is, along with Mexico's repression of labor, tax enforcement of environmental regulations and the general orientation of social policy to the desires of the privileged minority. Such policies are naturally welcomed by the manufacturing and financial institutions that, with the assistance of mislabeled "free trade" agreements, are extending their control over the global economy.

**The Indian peasants are the most aggrieved victims of government policies. But their distress is widely shared. "Anyone...in contact with the millions of Mexicans who live in extreme poverty knows that we are living with a time bomb."**

we are living with a time bomb," Mexican columnist Pilar Valdes observes.

In the past decade of economic reform, the number of people in rural areas of Mexico living in extreme poverty has increased by almost a third. Half of the country's total population lacks resources to meet basic needs, a dramatic increase since 1980. Following World Bank-International Monetary Fund (IMF) prescriptions, agricultural production was shifted to export and animal feeds—a policy that benefitted agribusiness, foreign consumers and

NAFTA is expected to drive large numbers of workers off the land, contributing to rural misery and a surplus of labor. Manufacturing employment, which declined under the reforms, is expected to fall more sharply. A study by Mexico's leading business journal, *El Financiero*, predicted that Mexico would lose almost a quarter of its manufacturing industry and 14 percent of its jobs in the first two years after the enactment of NAFTA. "Economists predict that several million Mexicans will probably lose their jobs in the first five years after

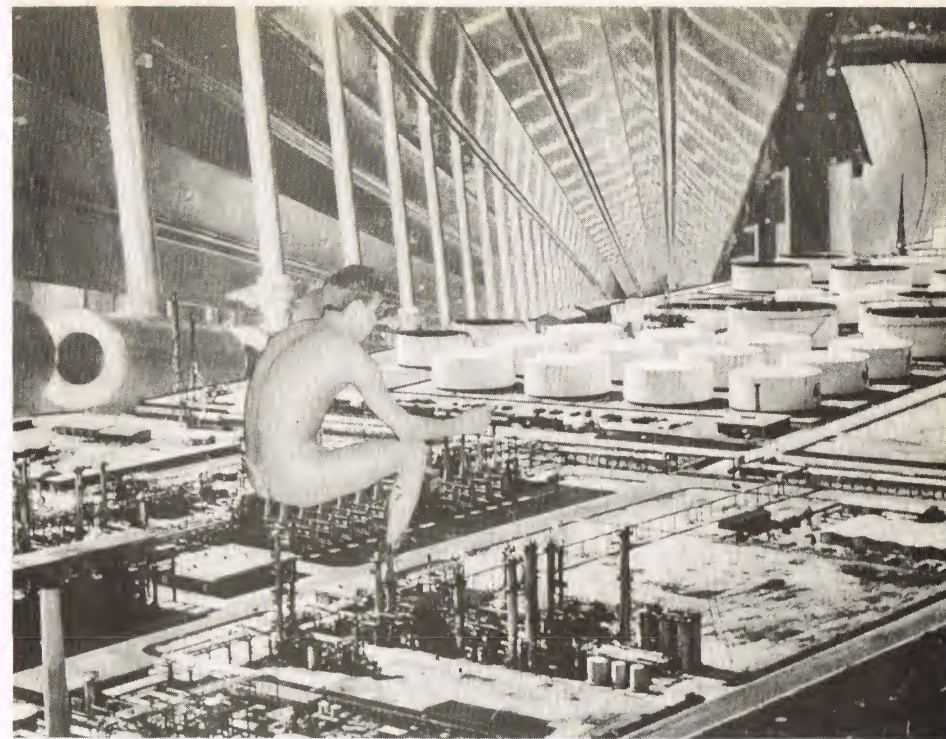
the accord takes effect," Tim Golden reported in the *New York Times*. These processes should depress wages still further while increasing profits and social polarization, with predictable effects in the United States and Canada.

A large part of the appeal of NAFTA, as its advocates have regularly stressed, is that it "locks in" neoliberal reforms. These reforms have reversed years of progress in labor rights and economic development, bringing mass impoverishment and suffering along with enrichment for the few and for foreign investors. To Mexico's economy generally, this "economic virtue" has brought "little reward," the *London Financial Times* observes. Mexico's "eight years of textbook market economic policies," the *Times* notes, produced only slight growth, most of it attributable to unparalleled financial assistance from the World Bank and the United States. High interest rates have partially reversed the capital flight that was a major factor in Mexico's debt crisis, but debt service is nevertheless a growing burden, its largest component now being the internal debt owed to the Mexican rich.

Not surprisingly, there was substantial opposition to the plan to "lock in" this model of development. Historian Seth Fein, writing from Mexico City, described large demonstrations against NAFTA as "well articulated, if too-little-noticed in the United States, cries of frustration against government policies—involving repeal of...labor, agrarian and education rights stipulated in the nation's popularly revered 1917 constitution—that appear to many Mexicans as the real meaning of NAFTA and US foreign policy here."

A Nov. 1, 1993, "Communication of Mexican Bishops on NAFTA" condemned the agreement, along with the economic policies of which it is a part, because of their deleterious social effects. They reiterated the concern of the 1992 Conference of Latin American Bishops that "the market economy...not become something absolute to which everything is sacrificed, accentuating the inequality and the marginalization of a large portion of the population."

The agreement was also opposed by many workers, including those in the largest non-governmental union. In the



Collage by Johann Humyn Being

*Los Angeles Times*, Juanita Darling described the great anxiety that Mexican workers feel about the erosion of their "hard-won labor rights," which are likely to "be sacrificed as companies, trying to compete with foreign companies, look for ways to cut costs" Unionists and other critics warned of NAFTA's impact on wages, workers' rights and the environment, the loss of sovereignty, the increased protection for corporate and investor rights, and the undermining of options for sustainable growth.

It has not taken long for such fears to be realized. Shortly after the NAFTA vote in Congress, workers were fired from Mexican Honeywell and GE plants for attempting to organize independent unions. This is standard practice. The Ford Motor Co. fired its entire Mexican

workforce at one plant in 1987, eliminating the union contract and rehiring workers at far lower salaries. Brutal repression crushed protests. Volkswagen, with the backing of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), followed suit in 1992, firing its 14,000 Mexican workers and rehiring only those who renounced independent union leaders. These are central components of the "economic miracle" that is to be "locked in" by NAFTA.

A few days after the NAFTA vote, the US Senate passed what Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-UT) called "the finest anti-crime package in history." The legislation calls for 100,000 new police, high-security regional prisons, boot camps for young offenders, extension of the death penalty and harsher sentencing, as well

as other onerous measures. But even law enforcement experts interviewed by the press doubted that the legislation would have much effect on crime, because it did not deal with the causes of social disintegration that produce violent criminals. Primary among these are the social and economic realities polarizing American society, which have been carried another step forward by NAFTA. The concept of "efficiency," as defined by those of wealth and privilege, offers nothing to growing sectors of the population that are useless for profit-making, and thus have been driven to poverty and despair. If they cannot be confined to urban slums, they will have to be controlled in some other way.



# Forests of the Milk River

*Some Thoughts and Details on Biodiversity*

Wade Davis

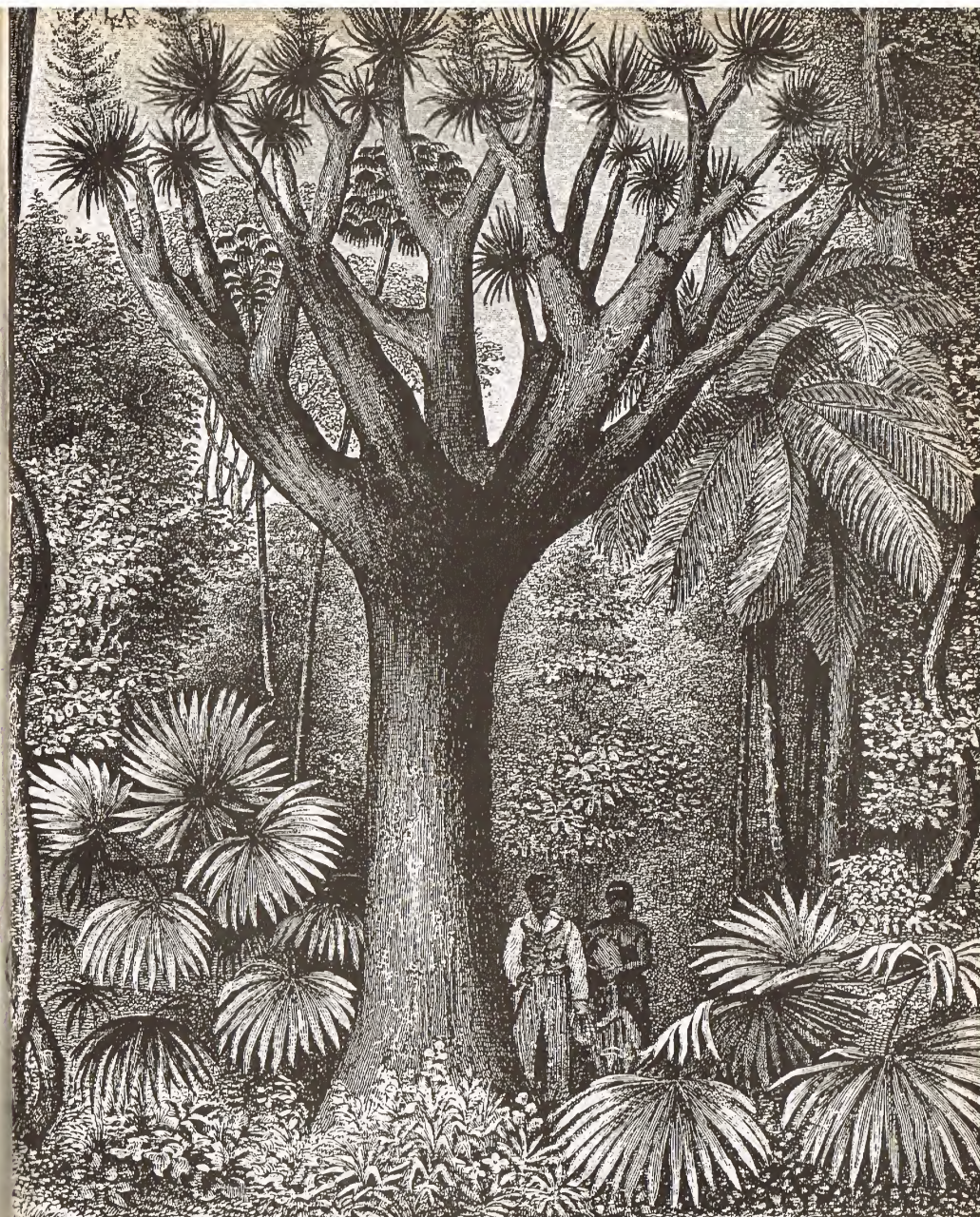
T

he capacity to forget, the fluidity of memory, is a frightening human trait. Several years ago I spent many months in Haiti, a country that as recently as the 1920s was 80% forested. Today less than 5% of the forest cover remains. I remember standing with a vodoun priest on a barren ridge, peering across a wasteland, a desolate valley of scrub and half-hearted trees. He waxed eloquent as if words alone might have squeezed beauty from that wretched sight. He could only think of angels, I of locusts. It was amazing. Though witness to an ecological holocaust that within this century had devastated his entire country, this man had managed to endure without losing his human dignity. Faced with nothing, he adorned his life with his imagination. This was inspiring but also terrifying. People appear to be able to tolerate and adapt to almost any degree of environmental degradation.

If Haiti offers a disturbing image of what may happen to the earth, the tropical rainforests represent the last best hope for the planet. Joseph Conrad wrote that the jungle was less a forest than a primeval mob, a remnant of an ancient era when vegetation rioted and consumed the earth. He referred to a time still known to our fathers, a time when the tropical rainforests of the earth stood immense, inviolable, a mantle of green stretching across entire continents. Today, in many parts of the tropics the

In "Forests of the Milk River" Wade Davis explores the enormous vitality of the rainforest ecology in South America, as well as the current drive to devastate the Amazon basin for the greater glory of industrial development. Wade Davis has worked in the field as a plant explorer and ethnobotanist. This essay has been reprinted from Volume 3, #1 of *Wild Earth*, a quarterly conservation journal focussing on wilderness and biodiversity issues, which is also the voice of The Wildlands Project. Subscriptions are available with membership in the Cenozoic Society at \$25/year. This essay will also appear in the author's upcoming book, *Shadows in the Sun*, to be published by Island Press/Shearwater Books in 1995.

Reprinted with permission.  
©1993 by Wade Davis.





...the central dilemma that confronts all travelers on their first visit to the Amazon...is the issue of scale and the impossibility of imagining rainforests of such magnitude. In the Amazon are three million square miles of forested lands still wet with the innocence of birth, a vast expanse of biological wealth the size of the continental USA, and somewhat larger than the face of a full moon.

clouds are of smoke, the scents are of grease and lube oil, and the sounds one hears are of machinery, the buzz of chainsaws and the cacophony of enormous earthmovers. It is a violent overture, like the opening notes of an opera about war, a war between human and the land, a wrenching terminal struggle to make the latter conform to the whims and designs of the former. The residue of war now colors the landscape of Borneo and Sumatra, Zaire and Madagascar, Costa Rica, Gabon, Indonesia and a hundred other lands once covered in forest. The conflict has even spread into the heart of the Amazon.

Even those of us from Canada, a country where landscape sweeps over the imagination and defines the essence of the national soul, it is difficult to grasp the size of the Amazon. A marvelous tale is told of the travels of Francisco Orellana, the first European to traverse the length of the Amazon. In 1541, having crossed the Andes in search of the mythical land of El Dorado, Gonzalo Pizarro dispatched Orellana on a desperate search for food. Orellana sailed down the Rio Napo, a swift river in eastern Ecuador, and it is said that when he finally reached the confluence of the Rio Ucayali, as the upper Amazon is known in Peru, he went temporarily insane. Coming as he did from the parched landscape of Spain, he could not conceive that a river on God's earth could be so enormous. Little did he know what awaited him two thousand miles downstream where the river becomes a sea and the riverbanks lie a hundred miles apart.

This story, apocryphal or not, tells of the central dilemma that confronts all travelers on their first visit to the Amazon. It is the issue of scale and the impossibility of imagining rainforests of such magnitude. In the Amazon are three million square miles of forested lands still wet with the innocence of birth, a vast expanse of biological wealth the size of the continental USA, and somewhat larger than the face of a full moon. The river itself is over 4200 miles long, just longer than the Nile and far more extensive, spread across five Latin American nations. Within the Amazon drainage are twenty rivers larger than the Rhine and eleven of these flow more than a thousand miles without a single rapid. The river delta is enormous. If the mouth of the Amazon could be superimposed onto Europe the Eiffel Tower would sit on the South bank and the north bank would support the Tower of London. Among the hundreds of islands in the delta is one named Marajo which is larger than Switzerland. Sedimentary deposits

at the mouth are 12,000 feet deep and freshwater may be drunk from the sea 150 miles beyond the shore. Tidal influences reach as far up the river as Obidos, a small city located just below the mouth of the Rio Trombetas, 250 miles from the apex of the Amazon delta and 450 miles from the sea.

The Amazon did not always flow into the Atlantic. Two hundred and fifty million years ago the South American continent was still attached to Africa, and the predecessor of the Amazon flowed west, draining an arc of massive highlands, the remnants of which are now known as the Brazilian and Guiana Shields. The river reached the Pacific Ocean somewhere along the shore of contemporary Ecuador. A hundred million years later the two southern continents split apart. Four million years ago the birth of the Andean Cordillera effectively dammed the river, creating a vast inland sea which covered much of what is now the Amazon basin. In time, these waters worked their way through the older formations to the east, and formed the modern channel of the Amazon.

The Rio Negro and the Rio Solimões, the two main branches that form the Amazon proper at Manaus, Brazil, are a legacy of these staggering geological events. The Rio Negro drains the northern half of the Amazon basin, rising in the ancient soils of the Guiana Shield, and its dark color is due to the high concentration of humic matter, very little silt load and a tannin content equal to that of a well brewed cup of tea. The Solimões and its effluents, by contrast, are born in ten thousand precipitous mountain valleys of the high Andes. Rich in sediments, these are the fabled milk rivers of Indian mythology, the source of rich nutrients that each year replenish the floodplain of the lower Amazon.

Rainfall in the Andes and water cut loose from the ice of thousands of Cordilleran glaciers drives the entire system. Remarkably, the Amazon River falls 14,000 feet in its first 600 miles, but only 240 feet over the last 2600 miles—less than one inch per mile. If the Washington Monument stood at the mouth in Belem, its tip would be higher than any building in Iquitos, Peru, a sizeable city 2000 miles upriver. The Amazon doesn't flow to the sea; it is pushed by the annual runoff from the Andean Cordillera.

Water, white or black, forms the dominant motif in the lives of all sentient creatures in the Amazon. In volume the river is five times larger than the Zaire, eleven times larger than the Mississippi. The Zaire is the second largest river on Earth, but within the Amazon system are two tributaries, the Madeira



©1993 Patrick Dengate

and Negro, that are each larger. The Amazon contains 20% of the world's fresh water. In one day the Amazon pumps as much fresh water into the Atlantic as the Thames does in an entire year. If the US Army Corps of Engineers could figure out a way to drain Lake Ontario and divert the channel of the Amazon, and no doubt they have such a plan, the lake could be refilled in three hours.

Beyond the borders of the seasonally replenished floodplain, which comprises a mere 3% of the land, beyond the reach of the milk rivers, lies another world, *tierra firma*, the upland forests. Only here does one begin to sense the overwhelming grandeur, the power of the forest. It is subtle. There are no cascades of orchids, no herds of ungulates as one might encounter on the Serengeti. Just a thousand shades of green, an infinitude of shape, form and texture that so clearly mocks the terminology of temperate botany. If you close your eyes you can sense the constant hum of biological activity, evolution, if you will.

The biological diversity of these tropical rainforests is staggering. A square mile of Amazonian forest may be home to as many as 23,000 distinct forms of life. Brazil harbors more primate species and, in sheer numbers, more terrestrial vertebrate animals than any other nation. More species of fish are in the Rio Negro than in all of Europe; more species of birds are in Colombia than in any other country. All of New England has perhaps 1200 plant species, the Amazon has more

than 80,000. While an acre of woodland in British Columbia might have six species of trees, an acre in the Amazon could contain over 300 tree species.

The insect fauna is especially rich. One researcher surveyed the canopy of 19 individuals of a certain tree species and found over 1200 species of beetles. Based in part on this remarkable discovery, entomologists now believe that a tropical rainforest harbor over 30 million species of insects. There are an estimated 10,000 species of ants alone and at any one moment there are over 1,000,000,000,000,000 ants alive. In the Amazon ants comprise over 30% of the total animal biomass. Harvard entomologist E.O. Wilson found in one tree stump in lowland Peru more taxa of ants than had been reported for all the British Isles.

These figures, impressive as they are, give little indication of the biological drama constantly being played out in the tropical rainforests. Break open the trunk of a common cecropia tree and find a colony of Azteca fire ants living inside the hollow internodes. The plant feeds the ants with tiny capsules of carbohydrate; the fire ants in exchange protect the tree from Atta ants, voracious leaf cutters in the forest. Long trails of workers scurry to unknown destinations, each toting a section of cut leaf like a sail on their backs. If you imagine these creatures on a human scale, such that their quarter-inch length becomes six feet, you note that each





Map by Chuck O'urray ©1993 by Wild Earth

Forests have two major strategies for preserving the nutrient load of the ecosystem. In the temperate zone, with the periodicity of the seasons and the resultant accumulation of rich organic debris, the biological wealth is in the soil itself. A tropical ecosystem is completely different...The biological wealth...is the living forest itself, an exceedingly complex mosaic of thousands of interacting and interdependent living organisms. It is a castle of immense biological sophistication built quite literally on a foundation of sand.

foraging ant runs along the trail for about ten miles at a speed of 16 miles per hour. At the end of the trail, each ant picks up a leafy burden weighing some 750 pounds and runs back at a speed of 15 miles per hour. This marathon is then repeated, without pause for rest, dozens of times during the course of a day and night. The ants do not eat the leaf fragments. They turn them into mulch which they use to grow the mushrooms that form the basis of their diet. Imagine a colony of three to four million ants, dwelling underground in thousands of chambers, cultivating in the darkness a mushroom found nowhere else in nature.

Consider the extraordinary pollination mechanisms of the giant lily, *Victoria amazonica*. This famous plant, with its enormous leaves capable of supporting the weight of a small child, grows in side channels and standing bodies of water throughout much of the Amazonian floodplain. The simultaneous opening at dusk of their massive white blossoms is one of the most inspiring scenes in the Amazon. The exterior of the flower has four large sepals covered by sharp spines. Within are numerous petals, arranged in a spiral with the smaller ones on the inside. Inside the petals is a whorl of thicker structures called stamens. Next are the 300 stamens which carry the pollen. Inside the stamens is yet another whorl of floral parts that together with the other structures form what amounts to a tunnel leading to a large cavity at the base of which is the carpel, a female part of the flower. Lining the carpel is a ring of appendages that are full of starch and sugar.

When the flower buds are ready to open, they rise above the surface of the water and precisely at sunset, triggered by the falling light, the flower opens with a speed that can be seen with the naked eye. The brilliant white petals stand erect and the flower's fragrance, which has been growing in strength since early afternoon, reaches its peak of intensity. At the same time, the metabolic processes that generate the odor raise the temperature of the central cavity of the blossom by precisely 11 degrees centigrade above the outside temperature. The combination of color, scent, and heat attracts a swarm of beetles which converge on the center of the flower. As night falls and temperatures cool, the flower begins to close,

trapping the beetles with a single night's supply of food in the starchy appendages of the carpel. By two in the morning the flower temperature has dropped, and the petals begin to turn pink. By dawn the flowers are completely closed, and they remain so for most of the day. In early afternoon the outer sepals and petals open. By now a deep shade of reddish purple, they warn other beetles to stay away. Last night's beetles, meanwhile, remain trapped in the inner cavity of the blossom. Then, just before dusk, the male anthers of the flower release pollen and the beetles, sticky with the juice of the flower and once again hungry, are finally allowed to go. In their haste to find yet another opening bloom with its generous offering of food, the beetles dash by the anthers, becoming covered with pollen which they then carry to the stigma of another flower, thus pollinating the ovaries.

This sophisticated pollination mechanism is, in its complexity, not unusual for the plants of the Amazon. Indeed, a botanist would be hard pressed to invent a strategy of pollination or seed dispersal that some species had not already come up with. There are fruits destined for birds and primates, tough woody fruits for the massive rodents, fruits that explode, fruits carried by bats, seeds that swim, and even seeds small enough to be dispersed by ants.

Perhaps the best symbol of the Amazon rainforest is the three-toed sloth, a gentle herbivore that dwells in the canopy of the forest. It moves literally at a snail's pace and this together with its cryptic coloration protects it from its only major predator, the harpy eagle. Viewed up close, the sloth appears as an hallucination, an ecosystem unto itself that softly vibrates with hundreds of exoparasites. The sloth's mottled appearance is due in part to a blue-green algae that lives symbiotically within its hollow hairs. A dozen varieties of arthropods burrow beneath its fur; a ten pound sloth may be home to over a thousand beetles.

The life cycles of these insects are completely tied to the daily rounds of the sloth. With its excruciatingly slow metabolism, the sloth only defecates once a week. When the sloth needs to defecate, it climbs down from the canopy, excavates



What percentage of the Amazon has suffered deforestation is a matter of debate. Estimates range from 2% to 25%. Experts agree, however, that the rate of deforestation has accelerated dramatically during the last decade. Every minute 50 acres are cut. Each day 75,000 acres disappear. Each year 76,000 square kilometers, a stretch of virgin rainforest three times the size of Belgium, is destroyed.

a small depression at the foot of the tree, voids its feces and then climbs back up. Mites, beetles, and even a species of moth leap off the sloth, deposit an egg in the dung, and climb back on their host for a ride back up the tree. The eggs germinate and the young insects find another sloth to call home.

Why does this animal go down to the base of the tree, expose itself to all forms of terrestrial predation, when it could just as easily defecate from the treetops? The answer provides a clue to the immense complexity and subtlety of this ecosystem. In depositing the feces at the base, the sloth enhances the nutrient regime of the host tree. That such a small amount of nitrogenous material might actually make a difference suggests that this cornucopia of life is far more fragile than it appears. In fact, many ecologists have called the tropical forest a counterfeit paradise. The problem is soil. In many areas, there is essentially none.

Forests have two major strategies for preserving the nutrient load of the ecosystem. In the temperate zone, with the periodicity of the seasons and the resultant accumulation of rich organic debris, the biological wealth is in the soil itself. A tropical ecosystem is completely different. With constant high humidity and annual temperatures hovering around 80°F, bacteria and other microorganisms break down plant matter almost as soon as it hits the forest floor. Ninety percent of the root tips in a tropical forest may be found in the top 10 cm. of earth. Vital nutrients are immediately recycled into the vegetation. The biological wealth of this ecosystem is the living forest itself, an exceedingly complex mosaic of thousands of interacting and interdependent living organisms. It is a castle of immense biological sophistication built quite literally on a foundation of sand.

Removing this canopy sets in motion a chain reaction of biological destruction. Temperatures increase dramatically, relative humidity falls, rates of evapotranspiration drop precipitously, and the mycorrhizal mats that interlace the roots of forest trees, enhancing their ability to absorb nutrients, dry up and die. With the cushion of vegetation gone, torrential rains create erosion which leads to further loss of nutrients and chemical changes in the soil itself. In certain deforested areas of the Amazon the precipitation of iron oxides in leached exposed soils has resulting in miles upon miles of

lateritic clays, a rock hard pavement of red earth from which not a weed will grow.

What percentage of the Amazon has suffered deforestation is a matter of debate. Estimates range from 2% to 25%. Experts agree, however, that the rate of deforestation has accelerated dramatically during the last decade. Every minute 50 acres are cut. Each day 75,000 acres disappear. Each year 76,000 square kilometers, a stretch of virgin rainforest three times the size of Belgium, is destroyed.

The effects of this deforestation will be felt continentally and globally. Since fully half of the precipitation in the Amazon is generated from evapotranspiration, we can expect rainfall in the basin to be reduced by as much as 50%. Worldwide, clearing operations that burn the remnants of tropical forests put 52 trillion kilograms of carbon dioxide into the air each year, an amount roughly equal to 40% of all industrial emissions. The result is the greenhouse effect, a warming of the Earth's atmosphere which, even by the most conservative estimates, promises unprecedented climate change and a rise of sea levels by as much as two meters, enough to inundate some entire countries.

The destruction of the Earth's tropical rainforests is resulting in massive loss of biological diversity. Although extinction is a global problem, tropical rainforests are particularly susceptible as species tend to occur in low densities with restricted ranges. The impact in certain regions of the Earth has already been devastating. In Madagascar, for example, 90% of the species are endemic, yet only 7% of the forest remains undisturbed. The Atlantic forests of Brazil, another center of high endemism, have been reduced to less than 2% of their original extent. Human activity is not only impacting individual species, but changing the actual conditions of life itself. Acid rain, global warming, the depletion of the ozone, the accumulation of synthetic compounds in the environment—these are changes in the actual chemistry of the biosphere.

The elimination of life, of course, is nothing new in the history of the Earth. Mass extinctions marked the end of the Permian, Triassic and Cretaceous, and other crises occurred in the Late Devonian and at the end of the Eocene. Shortly after the arrival of humans in South America 15,000 years ago, 45 of 120 genera of large mammals became extinct. In general,

however, over the last 600 million years speciation has outpaced extinction and the diversity of life has steadily increased.

What has changed in a disturbing way in the last fifty years is the rate of disappearance. Species extinction when compensated by speciation is a normal phenomenon. Massive abrupt species extinctions and the consequent biological impoverishment are not normal. The current wave of extinction is unprecedented in the last 60 million years, both in abruptness and probably in the total number of species that will be lost. During the extinction of the dinosaurs, for example, an extinction occurred roughly every 1000 years. Between 1600 and 1900 perhaps 75 species were driven extinct due to the activities of humans. Since 1960, within our lifetimes, extinction has claimed, at a conservative estimate, upwards of 1000 species per year. E.O. Wilson believes that during the last 25 years of this century one million species may disappear. That figure represents a loss of a species every 13 minutes, 110 each day, 40,000 a year.

Does this loss of biodiversity matter? Biologists may scoff at this question but providing an answer that makes sense to both the public and policy makers is, in fact, one of our most critical challenges. For many people, it is difficult to believe that the value of a single species is worth more than a parti-

cular development. Stanford biologist Paul Ehrlich explains the ecological significance of species diversity with a metaphor. Imagine, he writes, that as you are entering an airplane you notice a workman popping out rivets. The workman explains that the rivets can be sold for \$2 and thus subsidize cheaper airfares. When questioned about the wisdom of the procedure, he responds that it has to be safe, as no wings have fallen off despite many rounds of deriveting. This, in effect, is what we are doing to the biosphere through the erosion of biodiversity.

The value of a species, as Tom Lovejoy of the Smithsonian Institution has pointed out, is not simply that it may one day yield a pharmaceutical drug. Consider the potential of every form of life. A single bacterium, E.O. Wilson reminds us, possesses about 10 million bits of genetic information, a fungus one billion, an insect from one to ten billion depending on the species. If the information in just one ant were translated into a code of English letters and printed in letters of standard size, the string of letters would stretch a thousand miles. One handful of earth contains information that would just about fill all 15 editions of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. This is the true resonance of nature. Each incident of extinction represents far more than the disappearance of a form of life; it is the wanton loss of an evolutionary possibility.



Mark Neville



# Pornography & Pleasure

*Beyond Capital, Beyond Patriarchy*

Sunfrog

A

fter years of reading essays in the seemingly endless debate over pornography in the feminist and anarchist milieu, one of many questions reverberates with the most resonance for me: will pornography exist in utopia?

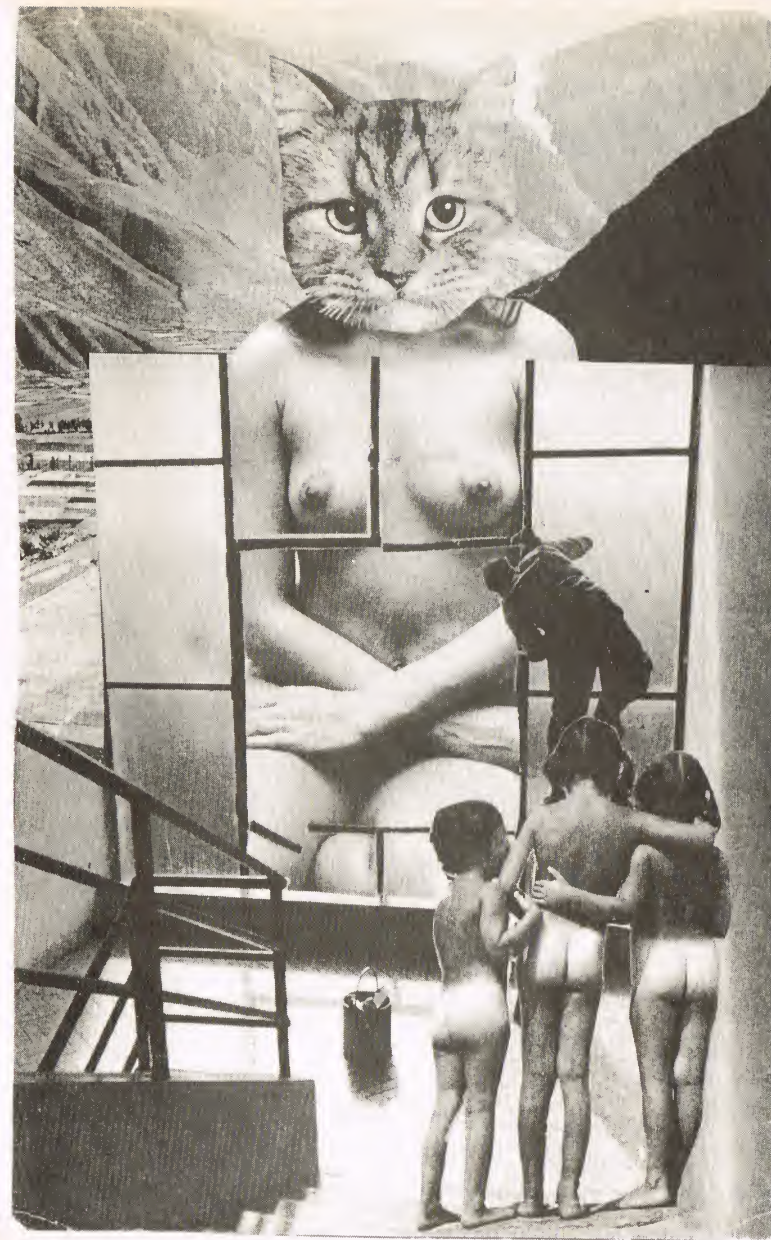
Ellen Willis, in her essay "Feminism, Morality and Pornography," states: "I imagine that in utopia, porn would wither away along with the state, heroin, and Coca-Cola." But even in utopia, won't some of us still write and make pictures that express our deepest erotic secrets and desires?

Will all forms of mediation be abolished when we experience mutual pleasure given freely in a community completely untethered from the coercive tyranny of commodified flesh? I envision a marvelous androgyny where hermaphrodites grow new parts and invent new ways of loving, but can I express this dream to others without language or visual images?

While everyone's utopian view of sexuality differs, I believe the broader discussion which includes the porn debate, should focus on a redefinition of pleasure outside the tortuously inscribed boundaries of the anti-pleasure society of patriarchal capitalism. Can we remove the thick veil of fear which separates us from taboo to allow the

In "Pornography & Pleasure" Sunfrog tackles the pornography debate from an unusual angle, that of utopia. Sunfrog is a member of the **Fifth Estate** collective. And this essay has been reprinted from Volume 27, #2 of **Fifth Estate**, a pathbreaking anti-civilization, anti-technology, anarcho-primitivist tabloid which has been publishing for well over two decades since its start as an underground newspaper in the '60s. **Fifth Estate** publishes quarterly. Subscriptions are \$6/year from 4632 Second Avenue, Detroit, MI 48201.

Reprinted with permission.  
Anticopyright 1992.



Collage by Sunfrog



*When we depart from the brutally constructed text of patriarchal pleasure, radical change can further the assertion of an autonomous feminist vision which reimagines lust and desire outside the societal script and beyond the economy of capital.*

unmentionable to emerge from within us as we fulfill our revolutionary desire?

### *Does porn = rape?*

Extensive rifts have emerged in the anarchist and women's liberation movements over the last two decades around the issue of porn. At one pole of the argument is the party line of Women Against Pornography and the government's Meese Commission on Pornography that defined all pornography as violence against women. Porn not only leads to rape; porn is rape.

A militant anti-porn movement has gained momentum and seeks to enlist all feminists in the fight, for if porn=rape, what kind of decent feminist would not agitate to abolish it? Several feminists and anti-authoritarians, firm believers in creative freedom and sexual liberation, troubled by the porn=rape theory and the uncomfortable collusion of feminists with the religious right, have formed clusters of anti-censorship dissent within their movements.

"Writing and pictures intended to arouse sexual desire," as one dictionary defines pornography, do not possess innate violent or misogynistic characteristics. Porn can depict a distorted and plasticized notion of human beauty that fuels false insecurities and sexual stereotypes. Insofar as porn is created by heterosexual men for male pleasure and profit in a male-dominated capitalist society and insofar as porn reduces women to sexual object/commodities to be viewed by a male gaze, it should be recognized as yet another mediated manifestation of a sexist society.

In her essay, Willis describes such phallic porn as a "psychic assault." She elaborates:

"As I've suggested, there is a social and psychic link between pornography and rape. In terms of patriarchal morality both are expressions of male lust, which is presumed to be innately vicious, and offensive to the putative sexual innocence of 'good' women. But feminists supposedly begin with different assumptions—that men's confusion of sexual desire with predatory aggression reflects a sexist system, not male biology; that there are no good (chaste) or

bad (lustful) women, just women who are, like men, sexual beings. From this standpoint, to lump pornography with rape is dangerously simplistic. Rape is a violent physical assault. Pornography can be a psychic assault, both in its content and public intrusions on our attention, but for women as for men it can also be a source of erotic pleasure. A woman who is raped is a victim; a woman who enjoys pornography is in a sense a rebel, insisting on an aspect of her sexuality that has been defined as a male preserve."

While anti-porn advocates have correctly identified the great bulk of porn as sexist and dehumanizing, any analysis, feminist or anti-authoritarian, that unequivocally moralizes and rants against pornography, runs the risk of simply reinforcing the traditional codes of femininity which relegate women to the restrictive "good girl" role and resurrects the tired Madonna/whore dichotomy. The "good girl" fulfills the feminine stereotypes of weakness and modesty that patriarchy promotes.

Paula Webster, in her essay "Pornography and Pleasure," argues for a different notion of female subjectivity and sexuality:

"The pursuit of sex threatens to make good girls bad, so we usually accept the cultural standard of sexual minimalism...few partners, fewer positions, less pleasure and no changing of preference. Nice girls don't talk about desiring sex. We talk about what they did to us. Women are allowed to be the objects of desire, to attract attention. But we have tended to refuse the role of sexual subject. Being forward, pushy, seeking sex are not acceptable. Being passive, teasing to please, are still preferred to seizing our own pleasure."

Webster delineates one serious drawback of the anti-porn movement by highlighting its tendency to "organize and theorize around our victimization...not our subjectivity and self definition." This urges women to "embrace our sexually deprived condition and begin to police the borders of the double standard that has been used effectively to silence us." She argues against the double standard (which celebrates sexual "promiscuity and permissiveness" in men and condemns

similar attitudes and behaviors in women). Instead, women should actively pursue "our gratification and masturbatory pleasure" for "our desires will not make us victims" but "will inspire us at the same time that we work to restructure society to be more hospitable to our own desires."

### *Erotica and porn*

Several activists have attempted to resolve the political implications of this discussion by relying on the false opposition of porn and erotica. "Erotica" is not only soft, romantic and "politically correct," it is completely inoffensive to bourgeois morality. As Webster states in her essay, where this fuzzy line is drawn usually "depends on personal taste, moral boundaries, sexual preferences, cultural and class biases."

Etymologically, the term pornography has explicit economic connotations ("writing about prostitutes") that are problematic in any anti-capitalist critique. But the word also suggests a certain "otherness" and outlaw nature that the recuperation of "Erotica" by hard-line moralists does not allow. Linda Williams echoes this discussion in her book-long feminist analysis of sexually explicit film and video, *Hardcore: Power, Pleasure and the Frenzy of the Visible*, when she uses the saying "one person's pornography is another person's erotica" and celebrates the fact that the "polar oppositions of a soft, tender, non-explicit women's erotica and a hard, cruel, graphic phallic pornography have begun to break down." We can become more precise when discussing specific examples of the multiple kinds of porn and erotica that exist in our contemporary culture and that could exist in the culture of our revolutionary desire, while avoiding whenever possible, politically charged generalizations using these confusing terms as all-encompassing banners. Can we explore new ways to distinguish alienating representations of the erotic from liberating ones? The positive potential of porn/erotica could be determined not by how explicit it is, but by whether it celebrates whole people rather than passive objects and exists outside the confines of commodity ex-



Collage by Sunfrog

change. Or is all mediated representation, regardless of intent, inherently alienating?

### *Erotic commodities?*

In a capitalist/sexist society, women are sexually exploited in all kinds of work. The humiliations of work resemble the humiliations of prostitution. Due to capital's gender inequities, women experience the humiliation more completely. As Paula Webster points out, "When we realize the extent to which all our bodies become commodities, the comfortable separations between feminists, especially academic feminists, and

prostitutes, office workers, and other 'exploited women' crumbles."

Capitalism and patriarchy promote the exploitation of women. The sexual violence of some videos and literature in the "Adult Bookstore" is connected with all the psychic and visual violence peddled by the war machine of mass media. Even more pervasive and dangerous than the "sleazy" porn most commonly attacked by anti-porn activists is the pornography of advertising, where sexually "alluring" images of women, on billboards, on television and in magazines, are used to sell products to people. This intense eroticization of the commodity unties sexism with compulsive consumerism and effectively helps



*I have already  
seen glimpses of  
radical do-it-  
yourself porn  
created by  
subversive punks,  
drag queens,  
polysexuals, femi-  
nists and  
queers—erotic  
utopians of every  
stripe. At the  
margins of  
underground mail  
culture, a whole  
feast of sex 'zines  
are circulating.*

people confuse their genuine sexual urges with a pale, profit-producing passion to shop 'til you cum with multiple ejaculations of cash. The "sex industry" should be abolished with all forms of industry and production which are techniques for commodifying our flesh.

### *Can we re-imagine lust?*

When we depart from the brutally constructed text of patriarchal pleasure, radical change can further the assertion of an autonomous feminist vision which reimagines lust and desire outside the societal script and beyond the economy of capital. New vocabularies can be written. We can refuse to embrace the vehement moral vigilance and witch-hunt style hysteria of many anti-porn activists and recognize the liberatory potential of a humanized erotica. We will not endorse violence against women, or bodies as products, when we write our sexually explicit poetry of resistance. The core of our sexual beings will be a catalyst for imagination and the place we experience the power of our dreams.

Our new erotica shall be contoured by an uncompromising revolt against industrialized skin. The putrid profit-oriented porn will be undesirable to us along with virtually all mass cultural interpretations of sex and gender. A completely different kind of porn will remain, and no morality cops under any reactionary or revolutionary banner will be allowed to suppress it. I have already seen glimpses of radical do-it-yourself porn created by subversive punks, drag queens, polysexuals, feminists and queers—erotic utopians of every stripe. At the margins of underground mail culture, a whole feast of sex 'zines are circulating.

Brenda Loew Tatelbaum, publisher of the feminist "porn" journal EIDOS states:

Dworkinite 'groupies' and NOW 'cheerleaders' function as sexual freedom revisionists while trashing the historical contributions of feminist advocates of sexual freedom. Frances Wright, Victoria Woodhull, Tennessee Claflin and Emma Goldman all confronted patriarchal authority and challenged society's gender-based/gender-biased taboos—as a natural alternative prefera-

ble to the coercive Church/State sanctioned paradigm of marital procreative intercourse. Similarly, the past examples of woman-created literary and artistic erotica (by Sappho, Emily Dickinson, Isadora Duncan, Anais Nin, George Sand, Virginia Woolfe, Anne Sexton, Erica Jong, Alice Walker, Georgia O'Keefe, Karen Finley and Annie Sprinkle) provide an alternative to the stereotypical language and images of male-created/male-defined/male-controlled female eroto-sexuality...."

Almost fifteen years ago Sonny Tufts wrote in an article on porn in the *Fifth Estate* that "eroticism contains elements of rebellion against the sterile modern world. Like all rebellion, it is two sided: the smashing of taboos is both liberating and terrifying, both revolutionary and reactionary, depending on circumstances and the consciousness of the protagonists." Like Tufts, I remain "hopelessly utopian," and invite all debate and discussion to help create a post-patriarchal revolutionary discourse on love and desire. What kind of erotic writings and images are humanizing and liberating to you?

I will close with a long quote from Guy Hocquenghem's essay, "To Destroy Sexuality," which appeared in *Semiotext[e]*'s provocative "Polysexuality" issue:

"What we want, what we desire is to kick in the facade over sexuality and its representations so that we might discover just what our living body is. We want to free, release, unfetter and relieve this living body so as to free all of its energies, desires, passions crushed by our conscriptive and programmed social system. We want to rediscover the pleasure in shaking ourselves joyously, without shame, not because of need or compensation, but just for the sheer pleasure of shaking ourselves. We want to rediscover the pleasures of vibrating, humming, speaking, walking, moving, expressing ourselves, raving, singing—finding pleasure in our body in all ways possible. We want to be transsexual, autonomous, mobile and multiple human beings...."

# Alternative to What?

*Rock'n'Roll is the Health of the State*

Tom Frank

## T It's Not Your Father's Youth Movement

here are few spectacles corporate America enjoys more than a good counterculture, complete with hairdos of defiance, dark complaints about the stifling "mainstream," and expensive accessories of all kinds. So now that the culture industry has nailed down the twenty-somethings, it comes as little surprise to learn that it has also uncovered a new youth movement abroad in the land, sporting all-new looks, a new crop of rock'n'roll bands, and an angry new 'tude harsher than any we've seen before. Best of all, along with the media's Columbus-like discovery of this new "underground" skulking around exotic places like Seattle, consumers have been treated to what has undoubtedly been the swiftest and most profound shift of imagery to come across their screens since the 1960s. New soundtracks, new product design, new stars, new ads, "Alternative," they call it. Out with the old, in with the new.

Before this revolution, punk rock and its descendants had long been considered commercially unviable in responsible business circles because of their incorrigible angriness, their implacable hostility to the cultural climate that the major record labels had labored so long to build, as well as because of their difficult sound. Everyone knows pop music is supposed to be simple and mass-producible, an easy matter of conforming to simple

*"Alternative to What" mercilessly dissects the latest permutations in the commodification of youth culture. Punk rock may have been a little too rough-edged and self-critical for easy commercial exploitation, but alternative rock has fewer drawbacks as far as corporate marketers are concerned. Author Tom Frank is an editor of The Baffler, an excellent independent magazine of literature, criticism and commentary. This essay has been reprinted from issue #5 of The Baffler, which publishes irregularly. Subscriptions are \$8/2 issues (\$10 for institutions) from The Baffler, POB 378293, Chicago, IL 60637.*

Reprinted with permission of the author.  
©1993 by The Baffler



genres, of acting out the standard and instantly recognizable cultural tropes of mass society: I love love, I'm sad sometimes, I like America, I like cars, I'm my own person, I'm something of a rebel, I'm a cowboy, on a steel horse I ride. And all through the '80s the culture industry knew instinctively that the music that inhabited the margins couldn't fit, didn't even merit consideration. So at the dawn of punk the American media, whose primary role has long been the uncritical promotion of whatever it is that Hollywood, the record labels, or the networks are offering at the time, lashed out at this strange, almost unfathomable movement. "Rock Is Sick," declared the cover of *Rolling Stone*. The national news magazines pronounced the uprising to be degeneracy of the worst variety, then proceeded to ignore it all through the following decade. Its listeners were invisible people, unmentionable on TV, film, and radio except as quasi-criminals. And in official channels of music-industry discourse—radio, MTV, music magazines—this music and the tiny independent labels that supported it simply didn't exist.

But now, it seems, the turning of generations and the inexorable logic of the market have forced the industry to reconsider, and it has descended in a ravenous frenzy on what it believes to be the natural habitats of those it once shunned. Now we watch with interest as high-powered executives offer contracts to bands they have seen only once, college radio playlists become the objects of intense corporate scrutiny, and longstanding independent labels are swallowed whole in a colossal belch of dollars and receptions. Now *Rolling Stone* magazine makes pious reference to the pioneering influence of defunct bands like Big Black and Mission of Burma whose records they ignored when new. Now we enjoy a revitalized MTV that has hastily abandoned its pop origins to push "alternative" bands round the clock, a 50-million-watt radio station in every city that calls out to us from what it cleverly called "the cutting edge of rock." And now, after lengthy consultation with its "twenty-something" experts, the mass media rises as one and proclaims itself in solidarity with the rebels, anxious to head out to Lollapalooza on the weekend and "mosh" with the kids, don flannel, wave their fists in the air, and chant lyrics that challenge parental authority.

*Time* magazine has finally smelled green in the music of what it longingly calls "the hippest venues going," and, in its issue of October 25, 1993, flings itself headlong into the kind of reckless celebrationism usually reserved only for the biggest-budget movies and the most successful TV shows. Salivating over the "anxious rebels" of "a young, vibrant alternative scene," it is all *Time* can do to avoid falling over itself in a delirious pirouette of steadily escalating praise. The magazine breathlessly details every aspect of the youngsters' deliciously ingenious insurrection: they're "defiant," they're concerned with "purity and anticommmercialism," they sing about "homes breaking," and—tastiest of all—they're upset about "being copied or co-opted by the mainstream." But for all this, *Time*'s story on "alternative" rock never once mentions a band that is not a "co-optation," that still produces records on an actual independent label. As per the usual dictates of American culture, only money counts, and indie labels don't advertise in *Time*. So Pearl Jam, a major-label

band that has made a career out of imitating the indie sounds of the late eighties, wins the magazine's accolades as the "demigod" of the new "underground," leading the struggle for "authenticity" and against "selling out."

Of course this is poor reporting, but journals like *Time* have always been more concerned with industry boosterism and the hard, profitable facts of making credible the latest packaging of youth culture than with a vague undefinable like "news." Thus while we read almost nothing about the still unmentionable world of independent rock, we are bombarded with insistences that Pearl Jam is the real rebel thing, the maximum leaders of America's new youth counterculture—assertions that are driven home by endless descriptions of the band going through all the varieties of insurgent posturing. They have a "keen sense of angst," and singer Eddie Vedder feels bad about the family problems of his youth. He rose to success from nowhere, too: he was a regular guy with a taste for living on the edge (much like the people in ads for sneakers and cars and jeans), a "gas station attendant and high school dropout," who thought up the band's lyrics while surfing. But Eddie's real sensitive also, a true Dionysian like Mick Jagger, with a "mesmerizing stage presence" that "reminded fans of an animal trying to escape from a leash." In fact, he's so sensitive that certain of the band's lyrics aren't included with the others on the album sleeve because "the subject matter is too painful for Vedder to see in print."

The gushing of official voices like *Time* make necessary a clarification that would ordinarily go without saying: among the indie-rock circles which they mimic and from which they pretend to draw their credibility, bands like Pearl Jam are universally recognized to suck. Almost without exception, the groups and music that are celebrated as "alternative" are watery, derivative, and strictly second-rate; so uniformly bad, in fact, that one begins to believe that stupid shallowness is a precondition of their marketability. Most of them, like Pearl Jam, play pre-digested and predictable versions of formulaic heavy guitar rock, complete with moronic solos and hoarse masculine poutings. There is certainly nothing even remotely "alternative" about this sound, since music like this has long been the favorite of teenage boys everywhere; it's just the usual synthetic product, repackaged in a wardrobe of brand new imagery made up of thousands of fawning articles and videos depicting them as "rebels" this or "twenty-something" that. A band called the Stone Temple Pilots, which graces the cover of other national magazines, has distinguished itself as the movement's bargain-boys, offering renditions of all the various "alternative" poses currently fashionable: all in one package the consumer gets sullen angst, sexual menace, and angry pseudo-protest with imitation punk thrown in for no extra charge. Another group called Paw is exulted by its handlers and a compliant media as the premier product of the ever-so-authentic Kansas "scene," complete with album-cover photographs of farms and animals; their lukewarm mimicry of Nirvana hailed as a sort of midwestern "grunge." Never mind that the bands founders come from a privileged Chicago background and that they have long since alienated most of Lawrence's really good bands by publicly crowing that one of their number killed himself out of jealousy over Paw's major-

label success. The sole marketable feature of these otherwise stunningly mediocre bands is their singers' astonishing ability to warble the shallowest of platitudes with such earnestness, as though they have actually internalized their maudlin, Hallmark-worthy sentimentality. But we aren't supposed to be concerned with all this: the only thing that matters is that the latest product be praised to the skies; that new rebels triumph happily ever after over old.

As ever, the most interesting aspect of the industry's noisy clamoring and its self-proclaimed naughtiness is not the relative merits of the "alternative" culture products themselves, but the shift of imagery they connote. Forget the music; what we are seeing is just another overhaul of the rebel ideology that has fueled business culture ever since the 1960s, a new entrant in the long, silly parade of "countercultural" entrepreneurship. Look back at the ads and the records and the artists of the pre-Nirvana period: all the same militant protestations of nonconformity are there, just as they are in the ads and records of artists of the '70s and the '60s. Color Me Badd and Wham! once claimed to be as existentially individualist, as persecuted a group of "anxious rebels" as Rage Against the Machine now does. But by the years immediately preceding 1992, these figures' claims to rebel leadership had evaporated, and American business faced a serious imagery crisis. People had at long last tired of such obvious fakery, grown unconvinced and bored. No one except the most guileless teeny-boppers and the most insecure boomers fell for the defiant posturing of Duran Duran or Vanilla Ice or M.C. Hammer or Bon Jovi; especially when the ghettos began to burn, especially when the genuinely disturbing sounds of music that was produced without benefit of corporate auspices was finding ever wider audiences.

By the beginning of the new decade, the patina of daring had begun to wear thin on the eighties' chosen crop of celebrity-rebels. Entire new lines of insolent shoes would have to be designed and marketed; entire new looks and emblems of protest would have to be found somewhere. Consumerism's traditional claim to be the spokesman for our inchoate disgust with consumerism was hemorrhaging credibility, and independent rock, with its Jacobin "authenticity" obsession, had just the things capital required.

Out went the call for an "alternative" from a thousand executive suites, and overnight everyone even remotely associated with independent rock in Seattle—and Minneapolis,

Chapel Hill, Champaign, Lawrence, and finally Chicago—found themselves the recipients of unsolicited corporate attention. Only small adjustments were required to bring the whole universe of corporate-sponsored rebellion up to date, to give us Blind Melon instead of Frankie Goes to Hollywood; 10,000 Maniacs instead of Sigue Sigue Sputnik. And suddenly we were propelled into an entirely new hip paradigm, a new universe of cool, with all the new stars and all new relationships between the consumer, his celebrities, and his hair.

And now Pepsi is no longer content to cast itself as the beverage of Michael Jackson or Ray Charles or even Madonna: these figures' hip has been obsoleted suddenly, convincingly, and irreparably. Instead we watch a new and improved, an even more anti-establishment Pepsi Generation, cavoring about to what sounds like "grunge" rock; engaged in what appears to be a sort of oceanside slam dance. Vanity Fair, a magazine devoted strictly to the great American pastime of celebrating celebrity, hires the editors of a noted "alternative" zinc to overhaul its hipness;

**Forget the music; what we are seeing is just another overhaul of the rebel ideology that has fueled business culture ever since the 1960s, a new entrant in the long, silly parade of 'countercultural' entrepreneurship. Look back at the ads and the records and the artists of the pre-Nirvana period: all the same militant protestations of nonconformity are there, just as they are in the ads and records of artists of the '70s and the '60s.**

*Interview*, the great, stupid voice of art as fashion, runs a lengthy feature on college radio, the site of the juiciest, most ingeniously "alternative" lifestyle innovations in the land. Ad agencies and record labels compete with each other in a frenzied scramble to hire leading specimens of the "alternative" scene they have ignored for fifteen years. Even commercial radio stations have seen the demographic writing on the wall and now every city has one that purports to offer an "alternative" format, featuring musical hymns to the various rebellious poses available to consumers at malls everywhere.

In the same spirit the Gap has enlisted members of Sonic Youth and the cloying pop band Belly to demonstrate their products' continuing street-cred; Virginia Slims has updated its vision of rebel femininity with images of a woman in flannel sitting astride a motorcycle and having vaguely '60s designs painted on her arm. Ralph Lauren promotes its astoundingly expensive new line of pre-weathered blue jeans and flannel shirts with models done up in "dreadlocks" and staring insolently at the camera. The United Colors of Benetton hones its subversive image by providing the costume for indie-rock figure "Lois." Another firm offers "Disorder Alternative Clothing" for the rebellious grungy "few who are tired of the mainstream." Quite sensibly, the makers of Guess clothing prefer the imagery of an idealized "alternative" band, played by models, to the real thing, since actual rock'n'rollers rarely



sate the company's larger obsession with human beauty. So there they stand, in a pose that just screams "authentic": four carefully unshaven guys in sunglasses, grimaces, and flannel shirts, each with a bandanna or necklace suspended carefully from their neck, holding guitar cases and trying to look as hardened, menacing, and hip as possible, with a lone blonde babe clinging off to one side. In another ad the Guess Clothing fantasy band are pictured "in concert," a flannel-clad guitarist spotlit with eyes closed, stretching one hand out to the heavens in an authentic consumer epiphany.

But the most revealing manifestation of the new dispensation is something you aren't supposed to see: an ad for MTV that ran in the business sections of a number of newspapers. "Buy this 24-year-old and get all his friends absolutely free," its headline reads. Just above these words is a picture of the 24-year-old referred to, a quintessential "alternative" boy decked out in the rebel garb that the executives who read this ad will instantly recognize from their market reports to be the costume of the "twenty-somethings": beads and bracelets, a vest and T-shirt, torn jeans, Doc Martens and a sideways haircut like the Jesus and Mary Chain wore in 1985. His pose: insolent, sprawled insouciantly in an armchair, watching TV of course. His occupation: consumer. "He watches MTV," continues the ad, "Which means he knows a lot. More than just what CDs to buy and what movies to see. He knows what car to drive and what credit cards to use. And he's no loner. What he eats, his friends eat. What he wears, they wear. What he likes, they like."

Thus with the "alternative" face-lift, "rebellion" continues to perform its traditional function of justifying the economy's ever-accelerating cycles of obsolescence with admirable efficiency. Since our willingness to load up our closets with purchases depends upon an eternal shifting of the products paraded before us, upon our being endlessly convinced that the new stuff is better than the old, we must be persuaded over and over again that the "alternatives" are more valuable than the existing or the previous. Ever since the 1960s hip has been the native tongue of advertising, "anti-establishment" the vocabulary by which we are taught to cast off our old possessions and buy whatever they have decided to offer this year. And over the years the rebel has naturally become the central image of this culture of consumption, symbolizing endless, directionless change, an eternal restlessness with "the establishment"—or, more correctly, with the stuff "the

establishment" convinced him to buy last year.

Not only did the invention of "alternative" provide capital with a new and more convincing generation of rebels, but in one stroke it has obsoleted all the rebellions of the past ten years, rendered our acid-washed jeans, our Nikes, our DKNYs meaningless. Are you vaguely pissed off at the world? Well, now you get to start proving it all over again, with flannel shirts, a different brand of jeans, and big clunky boots. And in a year or two there will be an "alternative" to that as well, and you'll get to do it yet again.

**...the most revealing manifestation of the new dispensation is something you aren't supposed to see: an ad for MTV that ran in the business sections of a number of newspapers. 'Buy this 24-year-old and get all his friends absolutely free,' its headline reads. Just above these words is a picture of the 24-year-old referred to, a quintessential 'alternative' boy decked out in the rebel garb...His occupation: consumer.**

It's not only the lure of another big Nirvana-like lucre-glut that brings label execs out in droves to places like Seattle, or hopes of uncovering the new slang that prompts admen to buy journals like *The Baffler*. The culture industry is drawn to "alternative" by the more general promise of finding the eternal new, of tapping the very source of the fuel that powers the great machine. As Interview affirms, "What still makes the genre so cool is not its cash potential or hype factor but the attendant drive and freedom to create and discov-

er fresh, new music." Fresh new music, fresh new cars, fresh new haircuts, fresh new imagery.

Thus do capital's new dancing flunkies appear not in boater hat and ingratiating smile, but in cartoonish postures of sullen angst or teen frustration: dyed hair, pierced appendages, flannel shirt around the waste. Everyone in advertising remembers how frightening and enigmatic such displays were ten years ago when they encountered them in TV stories about punk rock, and now their time has come to be deployed as the latest signifiers of lifestyle savvy. Now it's executives themselves on their days off, appearing in their weekend roles as kings of the consumer hill, who flaunt such garb, donning motorcycle jackets and lounging around the coffeehouses they imagine to be frequented by the latest generation of angry young men. Of course every other persecuted-looking customer is also an advertising account exec or a junior vice president of something-or-other; of course nobody would ever show up to see a band like, say, the New Bomb Turks or Prisonshake in a costume like this. As ever, Interview magazine, the proudest exponent of the commercialization of dissent, explains the thinking of the corporate mandarin who has now decided to dude himself up in a Sid Vicious leather jacket and noticeable tattoo. Punk, as the magazine triumphantly announces in a recent issue, has been successfully revived as a look only, happily stripped of any problematic ideological baggage:

Maybe '90s punk is just a great high style. Some will slash their own clothes, and others will clamor after the fashions of rule-slashing designers [are there ever any designers who don't claim to "slash rules"?]. If your mother doesn't like it, who cares? If your kid is embarrassed, stand proud. If your bosses fire you for it, screw 'em. And if people stare at you in the street, isn't that the point?

So on we plod through the mallways of our lives, lured into an endless progression of shops by an ever-changing chorus of manic shaman-rebels, promising existential freedom—sex! ecstasy! liberation!—from the mindless trudge. All we ever get, of course, are some more or less baggy trousers or a hat that we can wear sideways. Nothing works, we are still entwined in vast coils of tawdriness and idiocy, and we resolve not to be tricked again. But lo! Down the way is a new rebel-leader, doing handstands this time, screaming about his untrammelled impertinence in an accent that we know could never be co-opted, and beckoning us into a shoe store. Marx's quip that the capitalist will sell the rope with which he is hanged begins to seem ironically incomplete. In fact, with its endless ranks of beautifully coiffed, fist-waving rebel boys to act as barker, business is amassing great sums by charging admission to the ritual simulation of its own lynching.

#### Interlude: Come Around to My Way of Thinking

Perhaps the only good thing about the commodification of "alternative" is that it will render obsolete, suddenly, cleanly, and inexorably, that whole flutulent corpus of "cultural studies" that seeks to appreciate Madonna as some sort of political subversive. Even though the first few anthologies of writings on the subject only appeared in 1993, the rise of a far more threatening generation of rock stars has ensured that this singularly annoying pedagogy will never become a full-fledged "discipline," with its own lengthy quarterly issued by some university press, with annual conferences where the "subaltern articulations" of *Truth or Dare* are endlessly dissected and debated.

Looking back from the sudden vantage point that only this kind of image-revolution affords, the scholarship of academia's Madonna fans now appears as predictable in its conclusions as it was entertaining in its theoretical pyrotechnics. After careful study of the singer's lyrics and choreography, the professors breathlessly insisted, they had come upon a crucial discovery: Madonna was a gender-questioning revolutionary of explosive potential, a rule-breaking avatar of female empowerment, a person who disliked racism! One group of gaping academics hailed her "ability to tap into and disturb established hierarchies of gender and sexuality." Another celebrated her video "Vogue" as "an attempt to enlist us in a performance that, in its kinetics, deconstructs gender and race," an amusing interpretation, to be sure, but also one which could easily have been translated into academese directly from a Madonna press kit.

The problem is not that academics have abandoned their sacred high-culture responsibilities for a channel changer and a night at the disco, but that in so doing they have uncritically reaffirmed the mass media's favorite myths about itself.

Discovering, after much intellectual twisting and turning, that Madonna is exactly the rebel that she and her handlers imagine her to be, is more an act of blithe intellectual complicity than of the "radicalism" to which the Madonna analysts believe they are contributing. After all, it was Madonna's chosen image as liberator from established mores that made her so valuable to the culture industry in the first place. It doesn't take a genius to realize that singing the glories of pseudo-rebellion remains to this day the monotone anthem of advertising, film, and TV sitcom, or that the pseudo-rebel himself—the defier of repressive traditions, ever overturning established ways to make way for the new; the self-righteous pleasure-monad, changing identity, gender, hair color, costume, and shoes on a whim—is more a symbol of the machine's authority than an agent of resistance. But academics seem to have missed the point. For years the culture industry has held up for our admiration an unending parade of such self-proclaimed subverters of middle-class tastes, and certain scholars have been only too glad to play their part in the strange charade, studying the minutiae of the various artists' rock videos and deciding, after long and careful deliberation, that yes, each one is, in fact, a bona fide subversive. How thoroughly had they come around to the Industry's way of thinking; how desperately did they want to, *want to* get along!

But thanks to the rise of "alternative," with its new and vastly improved street cred, sneers, and menacing hairdos, the various postmodern courses by which each scribbler arrived at his or her conclusion that Madonna is "subverting" from within, and the particular costly academic volume in which they presented their "findings" are now, thankfully, finally, and irresistibly made irrelevant. Just as Madonna's claims to rebel authenticity have been made suddenly laughable by an entirely new package of much more rebellious rebel imagery, so their works are consigned to the same fate. Academia's Madonna fans have built their careers by performing virtually the same task, with a nice intellectual finish, as the toothy hosts of "Entertainment Tonight," and now they are condemned to the same rubbish bin of instant forgetting. Their embrace of corporate culture has brought them face to face with its unarguable conclusions, the steel logic of its unprotestable workings: obsolescence.

In at least one sense, then, the triumph of Urge Overkill is a liberation. At least we will never, ever have to hear this favorite Paglian (or, should we say, all-American) platitude chanted for the thousand-and-first time: "I admire Madonna because she's a woman who's totally in control of her career." And since it will take at least three years for the first close readings of the "Sister Havana" video to appear in assigned texts, let us enjoy the respite and ponder the strange twists of history that brought academia so closely into line with the imperatives of mass culture.

In this spirit I offer the following observation.

Perhaps the saddest aspect of all this is not scholars' gullible swallowing of some industry publicist's line, or even their naïve inability to discern Madonna's obvious labor-fakery. The real disappointment lies in their abject inability to recognize "popular culture" anywhere but in the officially-sanctioned showplaces of corporate America; their utter dependence on



television to provide them with an imagery of rebellion. Even as they delved deeper and deeper into the esoterica of poststructuralist theory, investing countless hours scrutinizing bad rock videos frame by frame, they remained hopelessly ignorant of the actual insurgent culture that has gone on all around them for fifteen years, for the simple reason that it's never made MTV. And academics, the wide-eyed, well-scrubbed sons and daughters of the suburbs, cannot imagine a "counterculture" that exists outside of their full-color, 36-inch screens. So in TV-land as well as the academy, Madonna was as "radical" as it got. Thus did the role of criticism become identical to that of the glossy puff magazines, with their well-practiced slaving over the latest products of the Culture Industry: to celebrate celebrity, to find an epiphany in

#### CULTURAL JETLAG—JIM SIERGEY & TOM ROBERTS

## Keep on Grungin'...



WITH APOLOGIES  
TO R. CRUMB...

© 1994 ROBERTS & SIERGEY

shopping, a happy heteroglossia in planned obsolescence. As for their interpretations, the professorial class might just as well have been proclaiming the counter-hegemonic undercurrents of "Match Game" or the patriarchy-resisting profundity of Virginia Slims advertising.

Imagine what they could do if they only knew about Borbetomagus or Merzbow!

### Fuck You and Your Underground

At the center of the academics' intricate webs of Madonna-theories lay the rarely articulated but crucial faith that the workings of the culture industry, the stuff that comes over our TV screens and through our stereos, are profoundly *normal*.

The culture-products that so unavoidably define our daily lives, it is believed, are a given—a natural expression of the tastes of "the people." This has long been a favorite sophistry of the industry's *paid* publicity flacks as well: mass culture is fundamentally democratic. The workings of the market ensure that the people get what the people want; that sitcoms and Schwarzenegger and each of the various sneering pop stars are the embodiment of the general will. Thus, as the academic celebrators of Madonna were always careful to assert, those who insist on criticizing Madonna are deeply suspicious, affected adherents of an elitist and old-fashioned aesthetic that unfairly dismisses "low" culture in favor of such insufferably stuffy pastimes as ballet and opera.

This anti-elitist theme is, quite naturally, also a favorite in sitcoms and movies, which establish their hegemony over the public mind by routinely bashing various stock snobs and hapless highbrow figures. Advertising repeatedly strikes the same note: a drink called "Somers" is to gin, one ad asserts, as a bright green electric guitar, implement of transgressive cool, is to an old brown violin, squeaky symbol of the slow-moving. A Pizza Hut commercial similarly juxtaposes a moralizing, old-fashioned stuffed-shirt man who is filmed in black and white, with a full-color, rock'n'roll rendition of the restaurant of revolt. And when the straw man of "cultural elitism" is conjured up by the academics for its ritual stomping, the feeling is exactly the same. There is only the dry, spare, highbrow of the privileged and the lusty, liberated lowbrow of the masses, and between these two the choice is clear.

This, then, is the culture of "the people." Never mind all the openly con-

ducted machinations of the culture industry—the mergers and acquisitions, the "synergy," the admen's calculations of "penetration" and "usage pull," the dismantling of venerable publishing operations for reasons of fiscal whimsy. What the corporations have decided we will watch and read and listen to is somehow passed off as the grass-roots expressions of the nation. And this is a crucial financial distinction, since the primary business of business is no longer, say, making things or exploiting labor, but manufacturing culture, finding the means to make you buy and consume as much as you possibly can, convincing you of the endless superiority of the new over the old, that the solution to whatever your unhappiness may be lies in a few new purchases. It is a truism of the business world that Coke and Pepsi don't make soda pop; they make advertising. Nike may pay Asian laborers starvation wages, but their most important concern is convincing us that it is meaningful, daring, and fulfilling to spend over one hundred dollars for a pair of sneakers. If you feel a burning need to understand "culture," get out of the coffee house and buy yourself a subscription to *Advertising Age*.

The media-flurry over the definition of the "Twenty-somethings" provides an interesting example of the ways in which "popular culture" is made, not born. Between the multitude of small presses and independent record labels that were founded, produced, and distributed by young people over the last decade, we have been a remarkably articulate, expressive group. But this is not what was meant when the various lifestyle journalists and ad agency hacks went looking for "Generation X." The only youth culture that concerned them was the kind that's prefabricated for us in suites on the Sunset Strip and Madison Avenue, and the only question that mattered was how to refine this stuff so that we, too, could be lured into the great American consumer maelstrom. Take a look at the book *13th Gen* by Neil Howe and Bill Strauss, the most bald-faced attempt to exploit the culture industry's confusion about how to pigeonhole us. As with the *Time* article on Pearl Jam, the book's lengthy cataloguing of "Twenty-something" culture never once even mentions an actual indie-label band or a magazine produced by young people; all that matters are the movies, the TV sitcoms, the major-label records that are targeted our way. The book's press kit (which, again, you

aren't supposed to see) explicitly cast *13th Gen* as a useful guide for executives in the advertising, public-relations, and election-winning industries. We are to be sold, not heard.

Under no condition is "popular culture" something that we make ourselves, in the garage with electric guitars and second-hand amplifiers, on the office photocopier when nobody's looking... 'Popular culture' sells us stuff, convinces us to buy some more soap or a different kind of shirt, assures us of the correctness of business paternalism, offers us a rebel fantasy world in which to drown our never-to-be-realized frustration with lives that have become little more than endless shopping trips, marathon filing sessions.

**Under no condition is 'popular culture' something that we make ourselves, in the garage with electric guitars and second-hand amplifiers, on the office photocopier when nobody's looking... 'Popular culture' sells us stuff, convinces us to buy some more soap or a different kind of shirt, assures us of the correctness of business paternalism, offers us a rebel fantasy world in which to drown our never-to-be-realized frustration with lives that have become little more than endless shopping trips, marathon filing sessions.**

meaning or shared aspects of our existence; on the contrary, it aims to make people stupid and complacent. "Popular culture" sells us stuff, convinces us to buy some more soap or a different kind of shirt, assures us of the correctness of business paternalism, offers us a rebel fantasy world in which to drown our never-to-be-realized frustration with lives that have become little more than endless shopping trips, marathon filing sessions.

"Popular culture" is the enemy; rock'n'roll is the health of the state.

In such a climate, the old highbrow/lowbrow categorization becomes utterly irrelevant: who cares about the intricacies of Brahms when the

world is being made and unmade anew every day by the power-tie and mobile-phone wielding commissars of public awareness? The great American cultural conflict has nothing to do with the clever *pas de deux* of affected outrage acted out by sputtering right-wingers and their blustering counterparts in Soho and Hollywood. It is not concerned with twaddle like "family values" or "cultural elitism," but with a much more basic issue: the power of each person to make his own life without the droning, quotidian dictation of business interests. If we must have grand, sweeping cultural judgments, only one category matters anymore: the adversarial. The business of business is our minds, and the only great divide that counts in music, art, or literature, is whether or not they give us the tools to comprehend, to resist, to evade the all-invasive embrace.

But between the virtual monopoly of business interests over the stuff you spend all day staring at and the decision of the academics to join the burgeoning and noisy legion of culture industry cheerleaders, very little that is adversarial is allowed to filter through. Our culture has been hijacked without a single cry of outrage. However we may fantasize about



Madonna's challenging of "oppressive tonal hierarchies," however we may drool over Pearl Jam's rebel anger, there is, quite simply, almost no dissent from the great cultural project of corporate America, no voice to challenge television's overpowering din. You may get a different variety of shoes this year, but there is no "alternative," ever.

And yet it is not for nothing that the rebel is the paramount marketing symbol of the age. Beneath all the tawdry consumer goods through which we are supposed to declare our individuality—the earrings, the

sunglasses, the cigarettes, the jackets, the shoes; beneath the obvious cultural necessities of an obsolescence-driven business regime, we find something deeply meaningful in the image of the free-spirit. We need the rebel because we know that there is something fundamentally wrong.

"Something fundamentally wrong." So ubiquitous is this feeling, so deeply entrenched is this unspoken but omnipresent malaise, that it almost seems trite as soon as the words are set on the page. And yet only the simplest, least aware, and most blithely comfortable among us retain any sort of faith in the basic promises of our civilization. Violence, fear, deterioration, and disorder are the omnipresent daily experiences of one class; meaninglessness, mandatory servility, and fundamental dishonesty inform every minute in the lives of another.

Violence, fear, deterioration, and disorder are the omnipresent daily experiences of one class; meaninglessness, mandatory servility, and fundamental dishonesty inform every minute in the lives of another. Conrad's horror and Eliot's futility have become the common language of everyday life. *We want out*, and the rebel, whether, of the "artistic," beatnik variety, the inner-city gangster type, or the liberated star-figures of "alternative" rock, has become the embodiment of our longings.

It is due only to the genius of the market that these desires have been so effectively prevented from achieving any sort of articulation, so cleverly and so imperceptibly channeled into dumb politics and simple acts of consuming, into just more and more and more of the same.

We may never be able to dismantle the culture of consumption and we will almost surely never achieve any sort of political solution to the problems of this botched civilization. Quite simply, no platform exists from which the monomessage of the media might be countered. The traditional organs of resistance, enfeebled by decades of legislative attack and a cultural onslaught they do not comprehend, have either made their peace with consumerism or cling to outdated political

goals.

But through the deafening mechanical yammering of a culture long since departed from the rails of meaning or democracy, through the excited hum of the congregation gathered for mandatory celebrity-worship, there is one sound that insists on making sense, that speaks piercingly through the fog of fakery, the airy, detached formulas of official America. Punk rock, hardcore, indie rock, the particular name that's applied is not important: but through its noise comes the

scream of torment that is this country's only mark of health; the sweet shriek of outrage that is the only sign that sanity survives amid the stripmall and hazy clouds of Hollywood desire. That just beyond the silence of suburban stupidity, the confusion of the parking lots, the aggression, display, and desperate supplication of the city streets, the possibility of a worthy, well-screamed *no* survives. Just behind the stupefying, smokescreens of authorized "popular culture" seethes something *real*, thriving on the margins, condemned to happy obscurity both by the marketplace, to whose masters (and consumers) its violent negation will be forever incomprehensible, and by the academic

arbiters of "radicalism," by whom the "culture of the people" is strictly understood to be whatever the corporate donors say it is. Unauthorized and unauthorized, it clamors in tones forbidden amid the pseudo-rebel propriety of the cultural avenues of the empire: complete, overriding disgust; routine degradation under the tutelage of the machine; a thousand mundane unmentionables like the sheer exhausting idiocy of shopping, the dark and not at all amusing vacancy of celebrity (because no matter what skillful postmodern maneuvers of ironic rationalization they make, the institution of celebrity requires, at its base, the unironic, and very real, mental surrender of millions of people in such places as Toledo and Detroit and Kansas City), the grinding inescapable ruination of the everyday, the mind-numbing boredom, the You're All Twisted, violence, distrust, anger. It is the frenzied transgression of the TV mandatory, the sudden giggling realization that something has finally come close, confronted the electronic fist with such forceful extremist honesty, with an openness so utterly foreign to the "realistic" violence of the Hollywood blockbuster, the scopophilia of the sex drama. For them it's fantasies of the comfortable cul-de-sac with state-of-the-art

security equipment, the fine car, the airborne curfew enforcement unit, the Lake Forest estate, the Westchester commute; for us it's the secession, the internal exile, the purging clean pure no; the unannounced thrashing release, the glorious never never never, the Won't Fit the Big Picture, the self-losing refusal to ever submit, the I'm not not not not not not not not your academy.

For this expression of dissent there has been no Armory show, no haughty embrace by aesthetes or editors. The only recognition it has garnered is the siege equipment of the consumer age, a corporate-sponsored shadow movement that seeks to mine it for marketable looks, imitable sounds, menacing poses. A travelling youth circus patterned, of course, after the familiar boomer originals of Woodstock and Dead shows, is invented to showcase the new industry dispensations. But so strange, so foreign to the executive are our "punk rock" rantings that they are forced to hire "youth consultants" to explain us to them, to pay marketing specialists vast sums to do nothing but decode our puzzling signifiers. For while we were discovering paths of resistance, the people who are now "alternative" product were busily transforming themselves into mandarins at business school, were honing themselves dumber and dumber at the college paper, were practicing their professional skills in the bathrooms of the frat houses. Only lately have they discovered that we're "hip," that our look has "potential," that our music "rocks."

So now, with their bottomless appetite for new territory to colonize, they've finally come around to us. For years they were too busy working their way up the corporate ladder to be bothered, but now what we have been building has begun to look usable, even marketable. But they won't find it easy. Ours is a difficult country, with all sorts of arcane pitfalls that will require an ever-mounting payroll of expensive consultant-guides, many of whom will lead them astray just for the sheer joy of seeing the machine seize up, of watching suburbanites wander about clad in ridiculous slang and hairdos. (Who was it that foisted Paw on A&M?)

We will not be devoured easily. Few among us are foolish enough to believe that "the music industry" is just a bigger version of the nextdoor indie label, just a collection of simple record companies gifted mysteriously with gargantuan budgets and strange powers to silence criticism. Few consider the glorified publicity apparatus that we call media as anything other than an ongoing attack by the nation's owners on the addled minds of the great automaton audience. We inhabit an entirely different world, intend entirely different outcomes. Their culture-products aim explicitly for enervated complacency; we call for resistance. They seek fresh cultural fuel so that the machinery of stupidity may run incessantly; we cry out from under that machine's wheels. They manufacture lifestyle; we live lives.

So as they venture into the dark new world of hip,

they should beware: the natives in these parts are hostile, and we're armed with flame-throwers. We will refuse to do their market research for them, to provide them amiably with helpful lifestyle hints and insider trend know-how. We are not a convenient resource available for exploitation whenever they require a new transfusion of rebel street cred; a test-market for "acts" they can someday unleash on the general public. And as they canvass the college radio stations for tips on how many earrings and in which nostril, or for the names of the "coolest" up-and-coming acts, they will find themselves being increasingly misled, embarrassed by bogus slang, deceived by phantom blips on the youth-culture futures index, anticipating releases from nonexistent groups. It has taken years to win the tiny degree of autonomy we now enjoy. No matter which way they cut their hair or how weepily Eddie Vedder reminisces about his childhood, we aren't about to throw it open to a process that in just a few years would leave us, too, jaded and spent, discarded for yet a newer breed of rebels, an even more insolent crop of imagery, looks, and ads. Sanity isn't that cheap.



Mark Neville





Collage by James Keenline

# The Political Economy of Ecstasy

Arch Stanton

"Christ! How many movements before them had run into this self-same problem. Every vision, very insight of the...original...circle always came out of the *new experience*...the *kairos* and how to tell it! How to get it across to the multitudes who had never had this experience themselves? *You couldn't put it into words*. You had to create conditions in which they would feel an approximation of *that feeling*, the sublime *kairos*. You had to put them into ecstasy."

-Tom Wolfe, *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* (1968)

Everything starts with an 'E'

f the several thousand substances known to be psychoactive in man, only a hundred or so are regularly used by him for recreational, ritual or social purposes, and most of these have been enjoyed by the cultures in which they have been consumed for generations. It is exceedingly rare for a novel psychoactive substance to be discovered in our own time, and rise to such popularity that a new name is added to the lexicon of western drug use. The last time was in 1963 when media reports of the expulsion of Timothy Leary and Richard Alpert from Harvard first told the world of the classic hallucinogen LSD or "acid". Twenty one years later in 1984 the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported the emergence of a new street drug known as "Adam" (and wrongly identified it as MDMA). Within a year *Newsweek* had not only given the substance its correct chemical name (3, 4 Methylenedioxymethamphetamine), but also popularized the street name that was to stick; the title of the article was "Getting High on 'Ecstasy'."

It is sometimes said that when a new drug is introduced into a culture, that culture struggles to integrate the individual experiences of a new form of intoxication into the collective cultural experience, causing a period of

"The Political Economy of Ecstasy" explores ongoing attempts to control the meaning and use of the relatively new drug Ecstasy. Arch Stanton is a contributor to *Here and Now*, an independent radical magazine which focusses on the analysis and critique of the newest forms and techniques of managerialism and professionalism in the maintenance and expansion of modern capitalism. This essay has been reprinted from issue #14 of *Here and Now*. Subscriptions are £4.00 by surface mail and £7.00 by airmail (checks made out to "GPP") from *Here and Now*, c/o Transmission Gallery, 28 King Street, Glasgow G1 5QP, Scotland, or (checks made out to "Here and Now") from *Here and Now*, POB 109, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS5 3AA, England.

Reprinted with permission of *Here and Now*. No copyright 1993.



"The emergence and rise in popularity of Ecstasy on both sides of the Atlantic...has had an effect on...diverse areas... But throughout it has been accompanied by a fierce battle for supremacy amongst those who wish to oversee or contain the experience, to define it in terms of which they are the true arbiters, to say who may take ecstasy, in what circumstances and why—in short a struggle to be the shamans of the new drug."

upheaval changing that culture irrevocably. Examples given are the effect of alcohol on Native Americans and Australian Aborigines and opium use in Britain in the 19th century. In other instances a substance that had been used ritually and largely without harm suddenly becomes an agent of misery for peoples whose culture has become disembedded from its original context, leading to the rules and guidelines for socialized use no longer pertaining. One example is the deleterious use of Khat by impoverished Somalis living in the UK. The lesson that has often been drawn from both phenomena is perhaps that for a substance to be used safely by a society its use must be integrated securely into its culture, limited by social or religious convention and often overseen or mediated by specialists, religious figures or shamans.

The emergence and rise in popularity of Ecstasy on both sides of the Atlantic, from unconfirmed reports of underground batches in the early 1970s in the US, to the estimated 500,000 doses consumed every weekend in the UK in 1992, has had an effect on such diverse areas as fashion, graphic design, football hooliganism, new age travellers, dance, marriage therapy, studies on the biological causes of violence, synthesizer programming, chemical classification and treatment for heatstroke. But throughout it has been accompanied by a fierce battle for supremacy amongst those who wish to oversee or contain the experience, to define it in terms of which they are the true arbiters, to say who may take ecstasy, in what circumstances and why—in short a struggle to be the shamans of the new drug. It is these people, the psychotherapists, psychiatrists, yuppies and drug workers who are being thwarted in their ambition by the mass use of Ecstasy, by people of every class, ethnic group and social background who are both learning (not without the odd casualty) the lessons of the Ecstasy experience for themselves and creating the rules and social context for its use.

### "Get ready for the best time of your life"

It is probably time to say something about the drug itself. MDMA is the N-methylated form of MDA (3,4 Methylene-dioxphenylisopropylamine) which is itself a relative of Mescaline (3,4,5 Trimethoxyphenethylamine). Many of these phenethylamines (and there are hundreds of them) combine to different extents the effects of a hallucinogen (like LSD)

with those of amphetamine (speed). MDA, "the love drug," enjoyed popularity amongst clubbers and others in both the UK and US in the '70s and is a reasonably strong hallucinogen. The effect of N-methylation (unlike with amphetamine where methamphetamine is considerably stronger) is to significantly attenuate the experience to a point where no true hallucinogenic effects are felt beyond some spatial distortion and heightening of color and sound. However this is far from the only difference between MDA and MDMA. All recreational drugs by definition produce intoxication. A few such as cocaine also produce a distinct mood change. Even those substances which are described as euphorants, such as opiates, do not always produce euphoria in all circumstances in those who take them. The detached dreamlike state induced by heroin and the relaxed intoxication of cannabis can be accompanied by a range of moods and emotions from bliss to paranoia depending on the mental state, disposition and circumstance of the subject. MDMA in a very large proportion of cases produces, as its name suggests, a mood of ecstasy in those who take it. Often this mood can be discerned by the user as distinct from the intoxication produced by the drug which, as mentioned above, is little more than a combination of amphetamine-like stimulation and cannabinoid-like sensory modification. The ecstatic effect has a number of characteristics:

- 1) It is emotional and creates a strong bonding with people, events and situations that are experienced with it (a tune heard for the first time on Ecstasy can become instantly rooted in the emotional memory and will often produce emotional nostalgia when heard later).
- 2) It is free from fear; one commentator described the effect as "switching off the anxiety centers."
- 3) It is externally focussed, joyful and exuberant, rather than contemplative. This goes some way to illustrate the empathic quality which has been much commented on. Other people become very important and the normal barriers between people are temporarily suspended. Empathy with others, even strangers, can be so strong that the subjective impression is one of emotional telepathy with other users just by eye contact.
- 4) It is familiar and memorable. The emotional rush from MDMA is like a much stronger version of feelings that we all





have or have had at some time in our lives. Nicolas Saunders (see note 7) remarked that the only time he failed to get much of an effect from Ecstasy was when he took it while he was in love and put it down to the fact that the two states were too similar to tell the difference.

5) The state also persists—albeit in an attenuated form for up to a week. Users report that the empathy, openness, tolerance and perspective from the ecstasy experience stays with them and that after it has finally faded, it can be remembered and recalled on an emotional level in a way which is quite different to, say, remembering a maudlin mood produced by excess alcohol.

These last two characteristics mean that the state produced by Ecstasy is often felt to be, if not exactly “natural” then most certainly “real.”

For reasons that will become apparent I have tried to describe above what the Ecstasy experience *feels like* and tried to avoid saying *what it means*. For this experience, which a far greater proportion of people who have tried it rate as pleasant than do for any other psychedelic (in other words, it has high “reliability”) is also an experience that has seen an almost unprecedented explosion of expert interpreters on both sides of the Atlantic. These are the would-be shamans, jostling with each other to reproduce the meaning of the experience in the idiom of their own class, profession and interest with the goal of making—and keeping—it their own. And all the while battling against an intransigent mass who take the drug on terms they have invented for themselves and who have for the most part no need of witchdoctors.

### **"I've got the key; I've got the secret"**

In his book *Ecstasy: The MDMA Story*, Bruce Eisner uncritically chronicles in detail the struggle to keep the drug within the community of responsible technicians and their friends. Of the period 1977-1984, before MDMA “escaped” into society he writes:

Learning from these earlier mistakes [i.e. the publicization of LSD by the Harvard Psychedelic Research Group] those who experimented with MDMA, many of them psychotherapists, attempted to control the dissemination of information about the drug as well as the substance itself...During that time, MDMA spread through underground channels which included psychotherapists, psychiatrists, long-term psychedelic drug experimenters, yuppies and a remarkable assortment of individuals of all kinds.

This “golden age” was brought to an end, however, with an article published on June 10, 1984 by Bill Mandel entitled “The Yuppie Psychedelic.” By the following month, after MDMA popped up in statistics collected by the World Health Organization, the US Drug Enforcement Agency announced its intention to place the drug in Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act, making it as illegal as heroin and having no medical use. (Ecstasy has always been outlawed in the UK since 1977 when it was banned pre-emptively upon the discovery of a formula for making it in a raid on a clandestine laboratory).

At once Ecstasy's guardians mobilized to retain control. A group describing themselves as “physicians, researchers, therapists and lawyers” established themselves under the name “Earth Metabolic Design Foundation.” At the same time four professors hired a lawyer to oppose the DEA and demand a hearing.

In 1985 a conference was held in Esalen, California, co-sponsored by Stanislav Grof and the EMDF. Of the 35 participants, five were veteran researchers on psychedelic drugs, and four were psychiatrists who used MDMA in their clinical practice. On day four, thirteen of the participants dropped an E! The conclusion of the conference was that “*supervised experimental use with full informed consent was medically acceptable and safe*” [author's emphasis].

By now the struggle was going public. After the *Newsweek* article in April 1985, there was a live studio debate on the “Phil Donahue” show on network TV, then an article in *Psychology Today*, then the “Doonesbury” strip by Gary Trudeau. As the DEA hearings continued, experts lined up on both sides to mark out their pitch. Ron Siegel, author of *Intoxication*—a ridiculous book in which various crude animal experiments are mobilized to “prove” that the drive for intoxication is a basic instinct—sided with the DEA and produced some startlingly dishonest testimony. On the other side Rick Doblin of the EMDF spoke of the “political implications” of empathy and proposed that Ecstasy should be used by the United Nations in a project called “Shaping a Global Spirituality While Living in the Nuclear Age.”<sup>12</sup>

Eventually in 1986 the DEA used emergency powers to place MDMA in Schedule I despite the judge's decision that it should go in Schedule III. This was then appealed as unconstitutional. More hearings, and, of course, more conferences, more medical testimony and more sociological research projects resulted.

Some of the more bizarre arguments advanced by the pro-Ecstasy experts in the battle to hold on to the franchise included: since MDMA produces a tolerance in the user, it has “low abuse potential”[!]; MDMA is not a hallucinogenic drug at all but belongs to a new class called “Empathogens” whose use in therapy enabled people to “*do changework on themselves very rapidly compared to ordinary therapy*”<sup>13</sup>; and MDMA is not a hallucinogenic drug at all but belongs to a new class called “Entactogens” “*allowing a touching within.*”<sup>14</sup>

### **"I've got the power"**

Throughout the struggle for control over the meaning of the Ecstasy experience in the US, a key plank in the arguments of the experts has been the status of the “archetypal” user. It was in the US that the now largely-forgotten term “Yuppie psychedelic” was coined. This view of a drug for the professional classes was exemplified in the seminal, yet now hopelessly irrelevant paper “Ethnographic Notes on Ecstasy Use amongst Professionals.”<sup>15</sup> Here users are quoted as being “*professional people like real estate brokers, nurses, doctors, lawyers, entrepreneurs in business*” who are “*middle/upper middle class.*” Various anonymous users—a 30 year old civil

**"The would-be shamans [are] jostling with each other to reproduce the meaning of the experience in the idiom of their own class, profession and interest with the goal of making—and keeping—it their own. And all the while battling against an intransigent mass who take the drug on terms they have invented for themselves and who have for the most part no need of witchdoctors."**

engineer, a 46 year old PhD, a 38 year old psychotherapist, a 51 year old airline pilot—are quoted to support the view that “*Ecstasy presents an opportunity to be open and relaxed within the context of a professional lifestyle that is stressful and very regulated*” which “*may have beneficial effects on their performance*” because of the “*necessity in a worried world for condensed ‘time out’ behavior.*” This view of Ecstasy as a time-saving leisure activity for the busy executive (a sort of microwave meal version of a four week vacation in the Caribbean) is just another version of the “it's OK with people like us” argument, this time on class lines.

### **"Let the music take control"**

In the UK, however, this kind of “substance abuse snobbery” was still-born as Ecstasy arrived in the mid-1980s and quickly became associated with the House Music scene imported from Chicago, leading to the explosive phenomenon known originally as Acid House and latterly as Rave. From its origins in the gay scene and the nightclubs of the Balearic Islands the synergistic combination of a drug which produces emotional euphoria and empathy with others and a fast music (average 125 bpm, that, “*though fundamentally eclectic and plagiaristic in its sources, is distinctive in its emotional impact: euphoric, uplifting, moving, nostalgic, intense, and transcendental*”<sup>16</sup>) produced the 1988 “Summer of Love.” Although the original scene of illicit large warehouse parties and illegal gatherings at motorway service stations—which excited some commentators with its images of youth confronting the police—quickly gave way to the more conventional, recognized and less illegal rave club scene, this has done little to diminish the popularity of the “total experience” that can be had at a rave. Music, flavored smoke, psychedelic lights, novel social relations and, of course, the drug provide a bombardment of the senses. By 1992 an estimated 100,000 people were going to raves every weekend with estimates of the number of people who have taken Ecstasy ranging from a million Es consumed every week<sup>7</sup> to a total of 750,000 people who have tried Ecstasy at raves.<sup>8</sup>

### **"Free Your Body! I'm in Ecstasy"**

For 1993 the estimated annual expenditure on drugs in Britain is 8 billion pounds and is believed to have increased by over 75% in the last 5 years.<sup>9</sup> And, of course, it's not just the

money spent on ecstasy itself which is generating economic activity around the rave scene. There are DJs, the clubs, the records, the pirate radio stations (Dream FM in London—now licensed) the magazines (*Mixmag*, *The Herb Garden*, *DJ, Generator*, 24-7) the fashion ('70s clothes revival and psychedelic posters that have replaced the “hunk holding baby” images of a couple years ago).

Although there have been complaints that all this commercial activity is an exploitation of ravers and the rave scene, these grumbles can usually be put down to two factors. Firstly, the inbuilt nostalgia that has accompanied the rave scene from the start (and appears to be in some way connected to the Ecstasy experience itself). To illustrate this point: Rosie Boytt in the *London Review of Books* in September 1989 bemoaned the fact that the summer of love of that year wasn't a touch on the one the year before. How many ravers does it take to change a light bulb? A dozen. One to change it, the others to say you just can't get good light bulbs any more. Secondly, there are complaints by those who failed to get on the bandwagon. Most of the economic activity listed above is carried out by independent outfits. It is the DJs who command decent money for playing recorded music at a “live” event rather than large record companies raking it in. Similarly the large leisure chains such as Rank and First Leisure have been hit by the ravers' disdain for alcohol. The Independent reported Richard Carr, chairman of Allied Leisure as saying: “Youngsters can get ecstasy for £10 or £12 and get a much better buzz than they can from alcohol. It is a major threat to alcohol-related businesses.”

### **"Who Loves You and Who do You Love?"**

The real threat of exploitation comes once again from the proliferation of would-be shamans amongst the state-funded cohorts of drug workers and their academic hangers-on. The former can barely contain their excitement at:

“rediscovering skills dating from the last upsurge in hallucinogenic and stimulant drug use in the late '60s and early '70s. Dealing with bad trips, giving advice on how to avoid or reduce them are once again becoming *bread and butter issues* [author's emphasis] for drug workers in the '90s.”<sup>10</sup>

Widespread Ecstasy use has come just in time for the drug workers. Where once the crack menace's failure to materialize and heroin use's stabilization threatened their careers, now there are “Golden E” rules” to promulgate, demographic user



profiles to establish and new methods of invasion to deploy. "Infiltrating this peer group is therefore a key tactic." (This quote is real!) At a "higher," though not distinct, level we have the academics who are advancing a more comprehensive strategy of interpretation and containment. For example, there is the socialist version which argues that raves are an attempt by kids to seize back control of their entertainment from the pre-packaged, isolating leisure on offer, and raising concerns amongst the working class that:

"...the same methods that send thousands of people to obscure country locations...could send them into the center of London at a few hours notice for a mass demonstration."<sup>12</sup>

Or there is the New Age version of the eco-Leary (and shaman mentor) Terence McKenna for whom raves are a re-emergence of the primal urge, long suppressed by industrial society, for the "3-D ritual" of dancing, drug-taking and drumming, by which we might re-discover the collective consciousness of the tribe. More recently there are being prepared: "An Ethnographic Study into the Impact of Ecstasy on the Drug-Taking Habits of a Group of Young Men in the Greater Manchester Area" by Mark Gilman, a research officer with the agency Lifeline. Gilman's hobby horse of the lessening effect on football violence (in 1991 soccer hooliganism fell to its lowest level for 5 years according to *The Independent*) is the perfect subject for the pseudo-populist "scally" persona with which he wows conference audiences. Sheila Henderson's "Young Women, Sexuality and Recreational Drug Use" seizes on the "women's studies" angle of what is a fairly redundant concern. (Empathy and sensuality, not sex, is the issue at raves, much to the chagrin of the AIDS and safer sex lobby who have missed another entrée.) And Sadie Plant's "Beyond the Spectacle—The Matrix of Drugs and Computers" combines two "sexy" subjects (three if the post-Situationist theme of the "Spectacle" in the title is taken up). How can she go wrong?

Harm reduction/minimization is the buzz term amongst many of these professionals, implying as it does a non-judgmental approach and diverting attention away from the fact that all these people have a vested interest in the phenomenon as their careers are tied up in interpreting it. In this regard, one honorable exception must be made in the case of Dr. Russell Newcombe, senior Research Fellow at the University of Manchester and self-styled Rave Research Bureau, who, despite his "sensible" Alternative Strategy for Regulating Raves (licensing of raves, training of door staff, provision of "chill-out rooms," provision of on-site drug information, etc.) treads a fine line between producing the information his paymasters demand and evincing a personal enthusiasm for the rave experience. As his reputation has deservedly grown Newcombe is gradually abandoning his caution at extolling the virtues as what he evidently regards as a thoroughly worthwhile phenomenon.

"Anyone who has been with an open mind to a large all-night rave will have subjectively felt this cathartic magical experience, or at least observed the physical evidence (e.g. synchronized crowd dancing waves of raised arms 'moving' across the crowd, spontaneous mass cheering, ecstatic strangers hugging)."<sup>13</sup>

## "My God, It's Full of Stars"

As the rave scene continues to fragment into more and more specialist styles: acid, garage, ambient, progressive, trance, jungle techno, hardcore, breakbeat—the customs and social relations that have seemingly spontaneously arisen within the culture, those of friendliness, conviviality, tolerance, compassion, disdain for violence and alcohol, religiosity, spirituality, looking after one another will continue. As Newcombe puts it: "Being seen with the 'in-crowd' has given way to being 'out-of-it' in a crowd." To go to a public place where friendliness is the presumption and where being happy is more highly valued behavior than demonstrations of good looks, sartorial elegance or social skills, is, in this society, a startling and refreshing change—and a moving one.

Despite the best efforts of the academics, experts, and careerists to seize control of the encoding of the ecstasy phenomenon, to contain the democratization of access to the experience Ecstasy provides would be like trying to get toothpaste back in the tube. In a much-cited anecdote, Brother David Steindl-Rast, a Benedictine monk, who tried Ecstasy at a conference is reported to have said:

"It's like climbing all day in the fog and then suddenly, briefly seeing the mountain peak for the first time. There are no shortcuts to the awakened attitude and it takes daily work and effort. But the drug gives you a vision, a glimpse of what you are seeking."<sup>14</sup>

## Notes

1. George Greer in *Advances: Journal for the Institute for the Advancement of Health*, Spring 1985.
2. Reported by Joe Klein in *New York* magazine.
3. Ralph Metzner in an address to a conference on Psychedelics and Spirituality.
4. This term was coined by David Nichols and "supported" by his esoteric argument that since both MDMA and MBDB are psychoactive despite having either/both structural features that diminish or attenuate hallucinogenic activity [N-methylation and alpha-ethylation] "...clearly one is not dealing with the pharmacology of hallucinogens any more but with some different category of psychoactive drug." "Differences between mechanisms of action of MDMA, MBDB and the classic hallucinogens. Identification of a new therapeutic class: Entactogen," David Nichols, *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs*.
5. M. Rosenbaum, P. Morgan, T. Beck. *The International Journal on Drug Policy* Vol.1, No.2. Sept./Oct. 1989.
6. Russell Newcombe, *The Use of Ecstasy and Dance Drugs at Rave Parties and Clubs: Some Problems and Solutions*. Nov. 1992. Liverpool.
7. Ian Wardle of Manchester Lifeline, quoted in *E for Ecstasy*, Nicolas Saunders, London 1993.
8. Russell Newcombe, *ibid*.
9. *Mixmag*, Vol.2, No.22, March 1992.
10. "Beyond Opium...and into the '90s," Mark Gilman. *The Ecstasy Papers*, London, 1992.
11. Andrew Fraser, Laura Gamble and Peter Kennett in the above.
12. S. Garret and L. Baker, "Clubland after Acid House: the We Generation," *The Face* December 1989. Quoted in *Raving and Dance Drugs—House Music Clubs and Parties in North West England*. Newcombe, July 1991.
13. Newcombe, 1992.
14. Quoted in *Ecstasy: The MDMA Story* by Bruce Eisner, Berkeley, CA, 1989.

## Alternative Press Magazines & Zines

Because of there is such a huge volume of alternative material being published, in any single issue we are only able to review a hundred or so of the periodicals we receive. We try to list every publication that we've received for the first time in a separate column following this one. We're always happy to exchange with other alternative periodicals (of 16 pages or more—or if tabloid size, 8 pages or more). Also keep in mind that the APR issue we send for exchanges will be the one your publication is reviewed in (when it is reviewed), so please be patient. APR does not exchange with non-English language publications. All reviews are by Jason McQuinn, except for those by Tad Kopley (noted with his initials).

### ABAPA FREER

#5/May '93 thru #8/Jan.'94 (Pat Underhill, POB 759, Veneta, OR. 97487) is a small-format, 18-page "aberrant assured publication arrangement" zine on freer places to live that is published in small print. Samples are \$1 cash.

### THE AFFILIATE

#81, March '94 (777 Barb Rd., Vankleek Hill, Ontario K0B 1R0, Canada) is the 40 page zine from "the worldwide network of open-minded friends with alternative lifestyles." This issue includes an article by EIDOS publisher Brenda Loew Tatelbaum, some poetry and a batch of zine reviews. Strong naturist/nudist/free-love tendencies are the driving forces behind this publication. My main complaint is that the layout/font choices literally hurt my eyes. Maybe it's just me. \$5 post paid. (TK)

### ALARM

#7/Summer & #8/Autumn '93 (POB 804, Burlington, VT 05402) is a 24-page zine subtitled "Voice of Revolutionary Ecology." The Summer issue includes Orin Langelie's proposal for a sort of synthetic deep ecology/social ecology in "Defining practice from the field: Revolutionary ecology." The Autumn issue includes a lengthy interview of native Cree concerning "James Bay: The current situation." Subscriptions are \$10/year.

### THE AMERICAN RATIONALIST

Vol.38, #4/Nov.-Dec.'93 thru #6/Mar.-April '94 (POB 994, St. Louis, MO. 63188) is a 16-page bimonthly subtitled "The alternative to religious superstition." Issue #6 includes a less than exciting piece by Rich-

## REVIEWS Alternative Press Magazines

ard Stratton titled "Is atheism boring?" Subscriptions are \$6/year (6 issues).

### THE BAFFLER

#4 & #5/undated (POB 378293, Chicago, IL 60637) is one of the most brilliantly critical of the journals covering pop culture, along with the "alternative" art and music scenes, billed as "The Journal the Blunts the Cutting Edge!" The 134-page, journal-format fourth issue features the excellent essay "Twenty-nothing" by editors Tom Frank and Keith White (which was reprinted in the last issue of *APR*), along with D.M. Mulcahey's "The libidinal tourist" (or "Twilight of the lifestyles"), Keith White's hilarious fiction "Gedney goes Bohemian," and Maura Mahoney on "The packaging of a literary persona," a review of *The Secret History* by Donna Tartt. The 168-page fifth issue is even better! This issue starts off with Tom Frank's dead-on rant titled "Alternative to what? Rock n Roll is the health of the state," and follows up with one piece after another sustaining this high level of critical prose, including Eric Iversen's "Making the scene: Brain dead in Seattle," Stephen Duncombe's "We're marketed therefore we are!" and an especially excellent youth-culture investment ad détournement titled "Consolidated Deviance, Inc." Also, along with all the searing essays, is a good selection of fiction, poetry and art. Don't miss these issues. Past numbers have already sold out, so send \$5 immediately for a sample copy, or better yet \$16 for a 4-issue subscription.

### BLUE RYDER

#33/Jan.-Feb. & #34/Mar.-April '94 (POB 587, Olean, NY. 14760) is a 16-page zine subtitled "The Eclectic Underground Reprint and Review Magazine." Issue #33 includes an excerpt from Joe Peacock's important pamphlet *Disinformation and Distortion: An Anarchist Exposé of AIDS Politics*. Issue #34 includes Catherine Travel's "Women in porn: Victims or vogueish?" (reprinted from *EIDOS*). Samples are \$1.50; subscriptions are \$8/year (6 issues).

### THE BODY POLITIC

Vol.3, #11/Dec.'93 thru Vol.4, #4/April '94 (POB 2363, Binghamton, NY. 13902) is an informative 22-page zine billing itself as a "Monthly pro-choice news report." Each issue includes a "Legislative Watch," while the March issue features Richard Belton's notable "Politics of fear: The use of Nazi strategies by anti-choice groups." Single copies are \$3; subscriptions are \$18/year.

### BRIGHT LIGHTS

#11/Fall '93 (POB 420987, San Francisco, CA 94142-0987) is a slick, visually impres-

sive 52-page film magazine. An "academic-popular hybrid" according to editor Gary Morris, this magazine will appeal to a lot of people who are looking for more sophisticated discussion of film than they'll ever find in more pop-culture venues. This particular issue focusses on a theme of "Sex and Horror," including articles by Monika Morgan on "Sexual subversion: *The Bride of Frankenstein*" (a "homosexual joke on heterosexual[s]"), by Judith Halberstam "On lesbians, vampires and Coppola's *Dra-cula*," and "2 views of *Jurassic Park*." Subscriptions are \$14.95/4 issues.

### CAPITAL & LIBERTY

#3/Nov.'93 (POB 694, Wayne, MI 48184) is a 6-page newsletter supposedly "focusing on freedom; a letter for the sovereign individual," but more often defending authority and capitalism, for example, arguing that U.S. military "cohesiveness requires that [soldiers] leave the greater part of policy making to higher authorities," and thus soldiers should uncritically follow orders. Subscriptions are \$8/year (10 issues).

### CRASH

unnumbered/May '93 (519 Castro St. #7, San Francisco, CA. 94114) is a 16-page zine for "travelers who want to see the world and meet people along the way." This is the "Expatriate Games" issue, including Miles Poindexter's take on Ernest Dunbar's *The Black Expatriates: A Study of American Negroes in Exile*. Subscriptions are \$5/6 issues.

### CRASH COLLUSION

#6/undated (POB 49233, Austin, TX 78765) is a nicely-done 44-page "Quarterly guide to the Fringe." This issue features an interesting interview with Thomas Lytle (publisher of the journal *Psychodelic Monographs & Essays*), and "A user's guide to mescaline-containing cacti," along with the usual UFO conspiracy nonsense. Samples are \$4; subscriptions are \$14/year.

### CRISES ALTERNATIVE PRESS EXHIBIT CATALOG

#5/June '93 & #6/Feb.'94 (CRISES Press, Inc., 1716 SW Williston Rd., Gainesville, FL. 32608) is an 82-page catalog listing books and periodicals participating in the CRISES Press exhibit at the semiannual ALA (American Library Ass.) conferences. Any alternative publishers that are serious about trying to get their publications into libraries—and willing to spend some money on the prospect—should contact Charles Willett of CRISES. Single copies are \$6; subscriptions are \$12/year (2 issues).

### EARTH FIRST!

Vol.14, #1/Samhain-Nov.'93 (POB 5176,



## REVIEWS Alternative Press Magazines

Missoula, MT. 59806) is a 48-page tabloid of the Earth First! movement/organization. Each issue is full of the latest information on Earth First! activities, demos and campaigns around the continent. This issue features information on last year's "Actions on Mt. Graham (still threatened by attempts to build an observatory), Mark Davis' "Open letter to Susan Zakin, author of *Coyotes and Town Dogs—Earth First! and the environmental movement*" (Zakin trashes EFT!), Judi Bari's "I blockade therefore I am: The legal question of Earth First's existence" (on the Louisiana-Pacific SLAPP suit against EFT), and Kieran Suckling's "Where have all the frogs gone? Global mass extinctions baffle scientists." Always recommended. Subscriptions are \$20/year (8 issues).

**EASTERN ORTHODOX THREAT**  
#5/undated & **FACE THE THREAT**  
#6/undated (3018 J St. #140, Sacramento, CA. 95816) is the playful 16-page tabloid successor to Alphabet Threat, Bicycle Threat, Castration Threat and Deep Threat. Contributions to issue #5 include entertaining pieces like "Giggle at the state: An absurdist womanifesto," a humorous centerspread map of "Sacramento: Your guide to our treasures," and "The summer of grunge." Issue #6 features a piece on "How to fuck shit up for the underground press: Eight lessons from the late '60s and early '70s for the aspiring government agent." Send a couple stamps or a donation for a sample copy.

**EIDOS**  
Vol.7,#3/undated (POB 96, Boston, MA. 02137) is an 84-page (about half ads) tabloid, subtitled "Sexual Freedom & Erotic Entertainment For Women, Men & Couples," published by the outspoken Brenda Tattelbaum who states that "Eidos advocates erotic justice and sexual equality for traditionally persecuted and oppressed sexual minorities." This issue includes pages of letters, book reviews, and an amazing number of alternative periodical reviews. This is one of the more open, and seemingly libertarian of the sex/porn/erotic periodicals I've seen. Many people will find this worth checking out. One of the best aspects of the magazine is that its letters policy is unusually open, and its huge classified ad section includes people with a wide variety of interests from all over the world. Sample copies are \$15; subscriptions are \$48/year (4 issues). Age statement required.

**FACTSHEET 5**  
#50 & 51/undated (Seth Friedman, POB 170099, San Francisco, CA. 94117-0099) is the 112 to 128-page magazine of marginal

& alternative press zine reviews, including well over a thousand reviews in each issue—all organized by subject in sections including: Personal Zines, Spirituality, Technology, B-Movies, Science Fiction, Queer, Grrrlz, Comix & Humor, Music, and much more, complete with an index! Each issue gets even better than the last. If you haven't seen this incredible zine, order one right now! Samples are now \$6; subscriptions are well-worth \$20/6 issues.

**FIFTH ESTATE**  
#343/Fall-Winter '93 (4632 Second Ave., Detroit, MI 48201) is a 32-page anti-civilization, anti-tech, anarcho-primitivist tabloid, consistently publishing some of the most intelligent writing in the radical milieu. This issue features an important analysis of "The PLO/Israeli treaty: Another defeat for the Palestinians" by George Bradford & E.B. Maple, Rob Riled's "Bosnia: End of the state or state of the end?" (on the rise of "warlordism" during the break-up of mega-states) and a response by Eddie Sabot titled "Putting 'fact' before poetry: a response." Also included is an update on the "McLibel 2" (being sued for spreading the truth about McDonalds), "U.S. gunmen to leave Somalia?" and coverage of the recent split in the Love & Rage network. *FE* is always highly recommended, and this issue is even livelier than many. Single copies are \$1.50; subscriptions are quite cheap at \$6.00/4 issues.

**FREEDOM WRITER**  
Vol.10,#5/Oct.-Nov.'93 (POB 589, Great Barrington, MA. 01230) is an informative 4-page bimonthly newsletter covering activities of the Christian right from a perspective of "Defending the separation of church and state." Subscriptions are included with a \$25/year membership in the Institute for First Amendment Studies.

**FRIGHTEN THE HORSES**  
#12/Sept.'93 (Heat Seeking Publishing, 41 Sutter St. #1108, San Francisco, CA. 94104) is an excellent 64-page magazine, subtitled "a document of the sexual revolution" and now published with a full color cover. This latest issue starts off with editor Mark Pritchard's comments on Madonna under the title "We don't need another hero," and continues with Neal Goldsmith's "Are you outing yourself?" (on the paper & electronic trails left by check and credit card purchases of sexually-related items), and John Earl's "Satanic panic: Part I—2000 years of witch hunts," along with plenty of transgressing fiction, news and book & zine reviews. This is one of the most important sex magazines around. Sample copies are \$6; subscriptions are \$18/4 issues.

**FUNNY PAGES**  
#50/Dec.'93 thru #54/April '94 (POB 317025, Dayton, OH. 45437) is a 12-page zine of occasionally funny, but just as often disgusting, humor aimed at celebrities, politicians, gender, race, gays, etc., now in a new 8 1/2x11 format. Those with poor taste will love this zine; others will have second thoughts. Non-offensive sample: "What's the difference between Congress and a vacuum cleaner? There's only one dirtbag in the vacuum cleaner." Subscriptions are \$10/8 issues.

**GAYME**  
Vol.1,#2/Feb.'94 (POB 15645, Kenmore Station, Boston, MA 02215) is an outspoken new 74-page semiannual magazine celebrating "a homosexuality that exists unnamed not because it cowers in guilty hiding, but because it cannot be delimited." This second issue features David Thorstad's revealing review of *Homosexuality and Male Bonding in Pre-Nazi Germany*, "The last interview with Boyd McDonald" (who documented the mid-century history of homosexuality), and an important piece analyzing the experiences of the increasing numbers of imprisoned queer adolescents and young men, as well as plenty of fiction, photos and reviews. This is a quality magazine that is well worth checking out. The cover price is \$5.95; subscriptions are \$10/year.

**GNOSIS**  
#30/Winter '94 (POB 14217, San Francisco, CA. 94114) is an 88-page quarterly journal of "the Western Inner Traditions." The Winter issue is dedicated to an exploration of Sufism, a much confused and misunderstood tradition in North America. Articles include Jay Kinney's "Sufism comes to America," and Ja'quib ibn Yusuf's "Sufism in the West and the question of religion." This is one of the best of this genre of magazines. Subscriptions are \$20/year; samples are \$6 postpaid.

**HERESIES**  
#27/undated (POB 1306, Canal St. Station, New York, NY. 10013) is a beautifully-produced 116-page "Feminist Publication on Art and Politics." This is an interesting theme issue on Latina artists, encompassing many different, sometimes conflicting, attitudes toward the usefulness of the "Latina" identity, along with art from a fairly wide range of contributors. Highlights of the issue include Marina Gutierrez on "Latinos/Hispanics...what next? Some reflections on the politics of identity in the U.S.," Marta Vega on "Resistance and affirmation in African diaspora Latin communities," and Cordelia Candelaria on "Letting *La Llorona* go, or, Re/reading history's tender mercies." Subscriptions are \$27 (4 issues).

**INCITE INFORMATION**  
#26/Jan.'94 (POB 326, Arlington, VA 22210) is a 12-page bulletin of "Inquiry and Commentary," including many short but interesting reviews of books covering conspiracy and media topics like Deborah Lipstadt's *Denying the Holocaust* and Adrian Havill's *Deep Truth: The Lives of Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein*. Subscriptions are now \$10/6 issues.

**INDUSTRIAL WORKER**  
#1566/Jan. thru #1570/May '94 (1095 Market St. #204, San Francisco, CA 94103) 12-page union newspaper of the Industrial Workers of the World, including a regular humor section titled "Wage Slave World News." The January issue includes a pair of worthwhile essays—David Noble's "In defense of Luddism," and Walker Smith's "Sabotage: Its history, philosophy & function." Subscriptions are \$10/year (12 issues).

**THE JOE BOB REPORT**  
Vol.9,#14/July 12, #16/Aug.9,'93, Vol.10,#1/Jan.10 & #3/Feb.7,'94 (POB 2002, Dallas, TX. 75221) is a 16-page, occasionally hilarious zine billed as "America's only weekly fanzine" of weird movies and drive-ins. Formerly titled *We Are The Weird*, this zine always features a dose or two of politically-incorrect humor. Sample copy free; subscriptions are \$65/year (26 issues).

**LIBERTY**  
Vol.7,#2/Jan.'94 (POB 1167, Port Townsend, WA. 98368) is an 80-page bimonthly "libertarian" magazine advocating "free market" economics. This issue includes Gerry Spence's eloquent "First they came for the fascists..." (on defending white supremacist Randy Weaver), an analysis of last winter's Canadian elections by Scott Reid, rabid student-left bashing by former liberal-leftist David Horowitz, Wendy McElroy's interesting analysis of "Abortion, reproductive technology, and feminism," and Jesse Walker's excellent extended review of *The Dream and the Nightmare: The Sixties' Legacy to the Underclass* by Myron Magnet. Subscriptions are \$19.50/year (6 issues).

**LIBRARIANS AT LIBERTY**  
Vol.1,#2/Jan.'94 (CRISES Press, Inc., 1716 SW Williston Road, Gainesville, FL 32608) is a new 16-page newsletter which "aims to give people working in libraries and related fields an unconstrained opportunity to express professional concerns." This second issue includes an article on "Censorship and social responsibility in Britain" by Chris Atton, and an account by editor Charles Willert of "Starting an alternative library" in Gainesville, FL, along with sev-

## REVIEWS Alternative Press Magazines

eral other short pieces and announcements. Subscriptions are \$10/year (2 issues).

**LOVE AND RAGE/AMOR Y RABIA**  
Vol.4,#3/June-July '93 (Box 3, Prince St. Station, New York, NY 10012) is a 20-page left anarchist news-bimonthly published in English & Spanish. This issue includes lots of short news pieces in sections titled "Notes of Revolt," "Anarchist Black Cross," "International News and Notes," and "Klan on the run," along with Richard Van Savage's "Squatters and the roots of Mau Mau: A history of squatting in Kenya," and a centerspread of reprints on the theme of "Strategy Moving towards Revolution." Subscriptions are \$9.00/year.

**LOVING MORE**  
#37/Winter & #38/Spring '94 (PEP, POB 6306, Captain Cook, HI. 96704-6306) is a 16-page polyfidelity newsletter, subtitled "A group marriage journal & network." The Spring issue includes Brett Hill's all-too-typical account of "How to have an unsuccessful nonmonogamous relationship." Subscriptions are \$25/year (4 issues).

**MADWOMAN**  
#5/Jan.'94 (1514 Holly Hill Dr., Champaign, IL 61821) is the 24-page (now small-format) "zine mouthpiece for SisterSerpents, a collective of 'rad fem arty types' bent on freely expressing their outrage at attacks on reproductive rights in particular and women in general. Sample copies are \$2.

**MEDIACULTURE REVIEW**  
Vol.2,#4/Oct.-Nov.'93 & Vol.3,#1/Feb.-Mar.'94 (100 East 85 St., New York, NY 10028) is a 20-page newsletter of media analysis from a liberal perspective published by the Institute for Alternative Journalism (which also maintains an online computer wire service carrying articles "from the independent and alternative press"). Each issue includes news and commentary covering the latest developments involving media technologies and policies. The October issue features Christine Triano on "Information for the people" (focusing on the National Information Infrastructure report), and Julian Dibbell on "Code warriors" (covering the battles being fought over public encryption). The February issue features a round-up of "Media heroes for 1993," and Julie Cagniglia's "The Internet revolution." Subscriptions are \$24/year (6 issues).

**MOUTH**  
Vol.4,#5/Jan.-Feb.'94 (61 Brighton St., Rochester, NY 14607) is an impressive, 48-page bimonthly "Voice of Disability Rights," unafraid to grapple with subjects

too often left unquestioned. This issue includes John Woodward's "Your right to squawk" (on speaking out), and Barbara Knowlen on "Tim Cook & disability rights law." Sample copies are \$3; subscriptions are \$16 to \$48/year.

**NAMBLA BULLETIN**  
Vol.14,#8/Nov. & #9/Dec.'93 (POB 174, Midtown Sta., New York, NY. 10018) is the 16 to 32-page newsletter of the North American Man/Boy Love Association. The November issue features Tom O'Carroll on Michael Jackson in "A Jackson jury on the streets." Subscriptions are \$30/year (10 issues).

**NAMEBASE NEWSLINE**  
#2/July-Sept.'93 thru #5/April-June '94 (Public Information Research, Box 680635, San Antonio, TX 78268) is a 12-page periodical distributed exclusively to users of NameBase (a microcomputer database with 142,000 citations and 67,000 names primarily tied to the intersecting agendas of intelligence, military, diplomatic and corporate circles—see NameBase review in *APR* #2). Issue #2 contains a very readable overview (though it's in very small type) on the subject of "Cyberspace wars: Microprocessing vs. Big Brother," written by Daniel Brandt. Issue #4 covers the recent J.F.K. "Assassination Symposium" held in Dallas. And issue #5 features Daniel Brandt's excellent overview of "Cults, anti-cultists, and the cult of intelligence." Free to purchasers of NameBase (\$79).

**OFF OUR BACKS**  
Vol.23,#11/Dec.'93 thru Vol.24,#2/Feb.'94 (2423 18th St. NW, Washington, DC. 20009) is a longstanding 32-page feminist news tabloid with a strong emphasis on international coverage. The December issue reports on female genital mutilation, the participation of women in the Second World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, and a very interesting interview with Martha Langelan concerning her recently published book *Back Off! Stopping Harassers in Their Tracks*. The January issue announced the failure of *New Directions for Women*, and includes a rant against "Queer politics," along with a piece by Jenn Christiansen on "Lesbian battering," and Vesna Kesic's extensive critique of Catharine MacKinnon's theory that the Bosnian mass rapes were caused by pornography! The February issue features a reprinting of "Backlash against survivors: The False Memory Syndrome Foundation" (from *Body Memories*), which argues that all accusations of child sexual-abuse based on "repressed memories" should be uncritically accepted. Subscriptions are now \$21/year (11 issues).



## REVIEWS Alternative Press Magazines

### ON THE ISSUES

Vol.2, #4/Fall '93 & Vol.3, #1/Winter '94 (POB 3000, Denville, NJ 07834-9838) is a slick 64-page mainstream feminist magazine, subtitled "The Progressive Woman's Quarterly." The fall issue features a collection of articles on the theme of "The Holy Wars: Fire from the right," including Neil deMause's "If you can't beat 'em, shoot 'em" (on the murder of David Gunn), Norine Dworkin's "The abortion issue: There is no choice without providers," and Mary Greenberg's "Clinics under the gun" (covering anti-choice blockades, firebombings and murders). Other highlights include Ellen Levy's attempt at a balanced assessment of anti-porn and anti-censorship feminists' arguments regarding anti-porn legislation, and a painful account of "When 'regular guys' rape" (and get off with a hand-slapping) by Christine McGoe. The winter issue includes Phyllis Chesler's bizarre defense of "Marcia Rimland's deadly embrace" (a suicide-murder in which a mother killed her daughter in order to prevent her from visiting an ex-husband the mother accused of unprovoked sexual-abuse), Elaine Rapping's perceptive commentary on "Mayhem at the movies" (on female roles in recent Hollywood cinema), Neil deMause's account of the continuing problem of "Counterfeit clinics, genuine pain," and an interesting examination of the place of female guerrillas in "Seizing history in El Salvador" by Betsy Morgan. This is one of the best periodicals covering feminist issues. Subscriptions are \$14.75/year.

### OUT YOUR BACKDOOR

#6/undated (4686 Meridian Rd., Williamston, MI 48895) is an always enjoyable 32-page zine—self-described as "A new magazine of low-budget fantasy adventure fun for folks." This issue is less adventurous than usual, but does include "The backdoor guide to paleo-funkoid used-camera shopping" by Ross Signal, Jeff Porter on "Dawn of the way cool bikes" (on recurrent cycles), and David Rumsey on "Night sounds." Sample copies are \$3; subscriptions are \$8/4 issues.

### PARANOIA

#3/Winter '94 (POB 3570, Cranston, RI 02910) is a 36-page zine subtitled "The Conspiracy Reader." This issue features a cover story on "Who killed John Lennon?" along with plausible articles like Thomas Arne's "Feminism's hidden history" and John Judge's "What was Jonestown?" (Though there are also plenty of implausible articles in each issue as well.) Subscriptions are \$12/year (4 issues).

### RACE & CLASS

Vol.35, #2/Oct.-Dec.'93 (120-126 Lavender Avenue, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 3HP, UK) is a professionally-produced, 112-page quarterly journal published by the Institute of Race Relations. Issue #2 includes Jeremy Seabrook's account of the "Death of a socialist: the Chattisgarh Liberation Movement" (in India), and "Arabicide in France: an interview with Fausto Giudice," along with other academic-style essays and some interesting book reviews. Subscriptions are \$28/year.

### ROLLERDERBY

#14/undated (131A Duboce, San Francisco, CA 94103) is an unusual and entertaining, unpaginated magazine exploring aspects of sex, love and everyday life with a offbeat sense of humor. Issue #14 includes a voyeuristic story reconstructed from found "Love letters from Linda," Cindy Dall's unhappy description of her new apartment in "Tenement life," A.L.W.'s short story "I had Psoriasis," a collection of farcical pieces fawning over the Harlequin cover-boy Fabio, and a short page on looking your best by being uncomfortable titled "The school of soft knockers" by Lisa. Samples are \$3; subscriptions are \$10/4 issues (checks made to Lisa Carver).

### SKEPTICAL INQUIRER

Vol.18, #2/Winter 1994 (Box 703, Buffalo, NY 14226-0703) is the well-produced, 116-page quarterly "Journal of the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal." Although its writers usually promote a dogmatic scientism in their approaches, they nevertheless successfully provide plenty of evidence to debunk many of the non-scientific targets that they investigate and analyze. This issue includes a straightforward explanation by editor Paul Kurtz of "The new skepticism" as he sees it, William Grey on "Philosophy and the paranormal: The Problem of psi," and an amusing account of "The attacks on role-playing games" by Paul Cardwell. The journal is worth checking out in this overly gullible world. Subscriptions are \$25/year.

### SMALL MAGAZINE REVIEW

#6/Nov.'93 thru #9/Feb.'94 (POB 100, Paradise, CA 95967) is a 24-page review of small press magazines with a focus on the literary side of publishing. Each issue includes a fair number of alternative press periodical reviews, though the quality varies quite a bit, with some reviewers inadequate to the task. The November issue features an interesting column by Merritt Clifton titled "Twenty years of collating," while Laurel Speer makes one of her better contributions in her column "Speer on Mags." With the February issue SMR has

merged with *Small Press Review* (see below) to make a combined 32-page publication. Subscriptions are \$20/year (12 issues).

### SMALL PRESS REVIEW

#251/Dec.'93 thru #254/Mar.'94 (POB 100, Paradise, CA 95967) 16 to 24-page review of small press poetry and fiction. With the February issue *SPR* has merged with *Small Magazine Review* (see above) to make a combined 32-page publication. Subscriptions are \$20/year (12 issues).

### SOCIETY AND NATURE

#4/undated (Subscription Services, POB 637, Littleton, CO 80160-0637) is a new 212-page academic-style journal (subtitled "The International Journal of Political Ecology") whose aim is "to reach a synthesis of autonomous—democratic, libertarian socialist and radical green—traditions." The theme for this issue is "Feminism and Ecology," including Greata Gard & Lori Gruen's lengthy but insightful overview titled "Ecofeminism: Toward global justice and planetary health, a reprint of Val Plumwood's 'Feminism and ecofeminism: Beyond the dualistic assumptions of women, men and nature,'" and Janet Biehl's critical "Problems in ecofeminism," along with other contributions from Chaila Heller, Mary Mellor and L. Susan Brown. For anyone interested in the most sophisticated of the green theorists, this is the place to be. Subscriptions are \$20/year (3 issues).

### SUBCONSCIOUS SOUP

Vol.3, #1/1993 (POB 421272, Kissimmee, FL 34742) is a 42-page, small-format, pro-hemp "Magazine of Free Thought and Counter Cultures." This issue includes an account of a first experience with LSD titled "The nature of things," along with a fair number of zine reviews (and as always a nicely done cover). Send \$2 + two 29¢ stamps for a sample copy; subscriptions are \$10/year.

### THE STAKE

#4/1993 (III Publishing, POB 170363, San Francisco, CA 94117-0363) is an irregular, 64-page zine of "Humor & Horror for a Dying Planet." This issue features an amusing account of "The case for Bible-based female bisexuality" by Denise Noe, and loads of short fiction from Margaret Simon's self-mutilation sketch in "Counting the Offering" to Jon Longhi's unsympathetic portrait of a punky, schizophrenic painter in "Bricks and Anchors." Subscriptions are \$12/4 issues; single copies are \$3.95.

### THIRD WORLD RESOURCES

Vol.10, #1/Jan.'94 (Data Center, 464 19th St., Oakland, CA 94612) informative 24-

page "quarterly review of resources from & about the Third World." Subscriptions are \$35/2 years.

### TURNING THE TIDE

Vol.7, #1/Jan.-Feb.'94 (POB 1990, Burbank, CA 91507) is a 20-page leftist tabloid subtitled "Journal of Anti-Racist Activism, Research and Education" and published by People Against Racist Terror. This issue includes a 3-page "Anti-racist resource list," a call for a "Culture of resistance," and news on California neo-nazis. Subscriptions are \$7.50/year (6 issues).

### UNCOMMON DESIRES NEWSLETTER

#11/April-May thru #15/Dec.'93-Jan.'94 (Postbus 408, 1000AK, Amsterdam, Netherlands) is a very well-done, 16-page zine "about girl-love, erotic desires, censorship, and the police state," including news of the latest persecutions involving sexuality and children. Issue #12 includes a touching account by Nancy Jo Sales of her exchange of letters and meeting with Woody Allen when she was 13 years old. Subscriptions are \$20/year cash or undesignated check.

### UTNE READER

#61/Jan.-Feb. & #62/Mar.-April '94 (Box 1974, Marion, OH 43305) is a well-established 144 to 184-page "alternative press" reader for left-liberals, concentrating on reprinting articles from the more mainstream "alternative" publications. The cover theme for issue #61 is "Too busy" (but don't blame it on capitalism and technology, it's your personal problem according to most of the theme pieces). Also included in this issue is an important article by Joel Bleifuss on the public relations industry (reprinted from *In These Times*). Issue #62, a "Special 10th Anniversary Issue," features a selection of pieces on understanding Islam and a section on "The rise and fall of oral culture," including the worthwhile "Against forgetting: Without memory, stories die" by David Watson (from *The New Internationalist*). Subscriptions are \$18/year (6 issues).

### WDR/WORLD DOMINATION REVIEW

#10/Spring & #11/Summer '94 (Larry & Sandra Taylor, 5825 Balsam Rd. #4, Madison, WI 53711) is an 8-page bizarre humor "Journal of Amateur of Amateur Paranoia." Issue #11 features a piece of cyberpunk fiction titled "A New Lo" by Chuck Hammill. Sample copies are \$2; subscriptions are \$4/4 issues.

### WESTERN REVIEW INSTITUTE NEWSLETTER

#23/July thru #25/Dec.'93 (POB 806, Chino, CA 91708) is a sometimes interesting 8-page newsletter of historical reinterpretation, attempting to make sense of our

## REVIEWS Alternative Press Magazines

current social predicament. Issue #24 contains a rambling discourse on "Green fascism: 1993." Subscriptions are \$25/? issues.

### WOMENSTRUGGLE

Vol.1, #3/Winter '93-94 (POB 54115, Minneapolis, MN 55454) is a 20-page quarterly tabloid "Newsjournal of women's activism and resistance across cultures." This issue features Claudette Begin's "U.S. feminists debate population control," an "Interview with Vicky Tauli Corpus" concerning the situation of indigenous Filipinos, a curious article on "Reorganizing time: A proposal from the Italian women's movement" (to legislate more paid "social time"), along with other news and analysis. This is an improving source for liberal-left feminist perspectives from around the world. Subscriptions are \$10/year.

### YELLOW SUB MAGAZINE

#6(?) thru #8/undated (POB 81, Elmira, NY 14902-0081) is an eclectic 42 to 48-page zine of comics, reviews and reprints (unfortunately in tiny print) from publications including *Time*, *Harpers*, *The Match!* & *Anarchy* among others. Sample copies are \$1.50.

### THE ZINE

#4/Nov.'93 (POB 288, Shere, Guildford, Surrey GU5 9JS, England) is a glossy & colorful 100-page "open access" monthly "for the young of all social groups to say and show what they want." Full of short contributions—fiction, poetry, articles, comix, photos, etc., most all contributed by readers, this professionally produced magazine is definitely worth checking out for kids from 8 to 80. Subscriptions are now £42.36/year.

### ZINES!

Vol.3, #3/Fall '93 (Christopher Martin, 221 N Blvd., Richmond, VA 23220-4033) is a well-written 12-page zine of zine commentary, focussing each issue on a few extended, informative zine reviews, along with personal ruminations. Sample copies are \$1 (cash only).

## First Time Listings

### ALADDIN'S WINDOW

#11/undated (28936 Shingle Creek Lane, Shingletown, CA 96088-9658) is an 86-page, photocopied zine, subtitled "The Vision of Awakened Men," whose main focus seems to be opposition to feminism of the "man-hating" variety from a variety of perspectives, though tending more to the right than to the left. There's a surprising amount of anger (sometimes bordering on

misogyny) within these pages crammed with occasionally articulate essays featuring provocative titles like Adam Parfrey's "Fucking Andrea Dworkin," Annie Le Brun's "Vagitt-prop," the unattributed "An unkind cut" (on circumcision), and H.J. Greeley's "The femi-totalitarians" (futurist fiction). At the very least, reading this zine reveals an undercurrent of resentment and reaction to feminism which usually remains invisible. Subscriptions are \$12/year(?); sample copies are \$3.

### ALARM CLOCK

#17 (Allen D. Salyer, POB 1551, Royal Oak, MI 48068) is 28 pages of girl-band fanzine. Contains interviews with Hammerbox and Sunshine Blind, news, and reviews. \$2 post paid. (TK)

### THE AND

#1/Spring '94 (612 N. Magnolia Dr., Tallahassee, FL 32308) "21st century pulp" in a comic-book format. Comics, short fiction and poetry. \$12 for four issues. (TK)

### APRIL 17 MAGAZINE

#2-3/August '93 (Alternative Information Center, POB 31417, Jerusalem, Israel) is a 32-page "Magazine for Information and Support of Political Prisoners," specifically focussing on the plight of Palestinian prisoners in Israel and the occupied territories. This issue includes an article on "Physicians against torture" by Neve Gordon, followed by statistics under the title "Torture: Anomaly or policy?" Contact AIC for subscription information.

### ARM THE SPIRIT INFO BULLETIN

#1/June thru #3/Sept.-Oct.'93 (POB 6326, Stn.A, Toronto, Ontario M5W 1P7, Canada) is a new 8-page newsletter supplementing *Arm The Spirit* magazine, an "Autonomist/Anti-Imperialist Journal." The contents (unfortunately in tiny print) most often focus heavily on the activities of German Red Army Faction, Kurdish militants, and political prisoners. Subscriptions are \$10/6 issues.

### ARSON

#2/Nov.'93 (c/o Scott Something, POB 1313, Nevada City, CA 95959) is a 28-page anarcho-punk zine from a high school kid. Well, he was, until he was expelled from his high school for producing and distributing the first issue of this zine. His tale of woe detailing that whole fiasco is included here, alongside some bomb recipes and anti-redneck/jock/dittohead polemics. Fun stuff. Trade, or \$1 and a couple of stamps. (TK)

### ART & UNDERSTANDING

unnumbered/Oct.-Nov.'93 (25 Monroe St., Suite 205, Albany, NY 12210) is a slick 68-



## REVIEWS Alternative Press Magazines

2page bimonthly subtitled "The International Magazine of Literature and Art About AIDS." This issue features an interview with Sandra Bernhard by Nick Steele. Subscriptions are \$22/year.

### AUFHEBEN

#2/Summer '93 (c/o Prior House, Tilbury Place, Brighton, E. Sussex, BN2 2GY, U.K.) is a promising new 52-page magazine of "Revolutionary Perspectives," featuring interesting essays on "Class decomposition in the New World Order: Yugoslavia unravelled," "Somalia and the 'Islamic threat' to global capital," and "Decadence: The theory of decline or the decline of theory." Subscriptions are £8/3 issues (I.M.O.s only).

### BAKUNIN

Vol.4,#2 (POB 1853, Simi Valley, CA 93062-1853) The literary mag "for the dead Russian anarchist in all of us." One of the best out there. If you're into experimental fiction, poetry, and the like, and you don't have this yet, you're missing out. In 126 pages of perfect-bound journal, even the most sophisticated of cultured jades should find something entertaining. \$5 for a sample issue. (TK)

### BANDICOOT

#2/undated (POB 192261, San Francisco, CA 94119-2261) is a 92-page literary magazine, and one of the more interesting ones around if this issue is any indication. Notable among the poetry, fiction, interviews and essays are "The subculture network: An interview with Jennifer Blowdryer" by C.G. Pulleyblank, and "Long night in Butcher Town" by Bill Cassel & Douglas Perry. Sample copies are \$6.05.

### BIKER PRIDE

#4/undated (c/o New Media Club, UWM Union Box 122, POB 413, Milwaukee, WI 53201) is an unpaginated, unusually formatted, but very readable zine dedicated to bicycling in all forms, with a cover maxim proclaiming "Everything to the Maximum." This issue features the publisher's reasoning for attempting to build a touring bike from found parts titled "Of parts and performance: A case for scavenged bikes." Sample copies are available for two 29¢ stamps.

### BIZARRA

#2 (POB 3118, Albany, NY. 12203) 24 page xerox zine from Albany-Rensselaer's dispossessed, of which there are many. This publication aims to "fill the void that wants to get in between your ears" with prose/poetry/artwork. Don't think it quite manages, but there is some flippant, fun stuff here. \$1 or trade. (TK)

### BLACK FIST

#3/undated (15110 Bellaire, Box 317, Houston, TX. 77083) is a growing, 36-page "anarchist magazine of radical politics, culture and society." This issue includes "Peace? War!" (on Operation Rescue's defeat in Dallas), and a couple pieces of anarchist history—"Anarchism in Mexico 1860-1900" and "Anarchism in Spain 1860-1900," both by Malacoda X. Cover price is \$3; subscriptions are \$6/year (? issues).

### BLAZIN' AURALITES

#2 (4083 Clark, Montréal, Quebec, Canada. H2W 1X1) "An Irregular Review of Spoken Word Recordings" is 20 pages of some of the most interesting stuff you've ever likely to hear of—or hear. Reviews of spoken word material collected together in one handy reference zine. Cuss into a cassette and mail it to them, see what they say. This is a must have for spoken word addicts and cassette culture mavens. \$4 an issue. (TK)

### BLUE PERSUASION

(c/o Aaron, 603 E. Main #2, Lexington, KY 40508) Irreverent, iconoclastic, sexy, not for the faint-of-heart or easily offended, BP is everything a good home-made rant-zine should be. These folks have a relatively sick sense of humor and are proud of it. Issue #2 is 38 pages of Shonen Knife, Faces of Death, and Mark David Chapman with short bits on machismo and sex. #3 touches on the Mitchell Brothers, Pasolini, whippings, and Barney. If frank talk of sex (or anything else) makes you blanch, don't send \$2.50 for an issue. (TK)

### BOVINE GAZETTE

Vol.2,#8/Dec.'93-Jan.'94 (S.C. Taylor, Mad Dog Productions, POB 2263, Pasadena, CA 91102) is an unpaginated humor zine, including "Professor Slug" comics and "Ross Perot" explaining why he lost the election (because Clinton is the "Antichrist"). Sample copies are \$1; subscriptions are \$5/6 issues.

### BRUCE ON A STICK

(POB 416, Tarrytown, NY 10591) A "fanzine" in the true, original sense of the word, Bruce On a Stick is dedicated to the worship and support of Bruce Campbell—star of both "Evil Dead" films, hero of "Army of Darkness," and portrayor of the gunslinging goombah in Fox TV's "Brisco County, Jr." Campbell has achieved cult status because the characters he plays are as cartoonish and indestructible as Wile E. Coyote. Well, if you know who he is, you know this stuff already, if you don't know who he is, you probably don't care. BOAS #1 contains an interview with Bruce and a hilarious plea on behalf of the career of

sci-fi has-been Mark Hamill, as well as a "Bruce" paper doll. Issue #2 has another, longer interview with Bruce about colleague Sam Raimi, childhood fantasies, and the like. You get the idea. Film freaks will love this. \$3 per issue. (TK)

### THE BULLETIN OF THE ATOMIC SCIENTISTS

Vol.49,#8/Oct.'93 (6042 S. Kimbark Ave., Chicago, IL 60637-9989) is a slick, long-running 56-page magazine focussing on issues like nuclear proliferation, atomic and other forms of energy, and the dangers of global conflicts. This is a special issue covering the current turmoil in newly-independent, oil-rich Kazakhstan. Subscriptions are \$30/year (10 issues).

### BURPING LULA

(Scott, POB 14738, Richmond, VA 23221) A free punkzine from the DC area, this crazily laid-out xerox foldover has everything you'd expect a punk zine to have—an interview (w/Velocity Girl) reviews (of music, live and recorded) and short editorial rants about things any good young, early nineties "slacker-type" should be pissed off about. The standout bit is a short one concerning selling your body and its fluids to science in pharmaceutical testing experiments. \$1 should buy you one if you're interested. (TK)

### CHEERLEADERS

#1 (SPAZ, 58112 Darlington Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15217) is a fanzine (or is it a rantzine?) about cheerleaders and sexual politics. 44 densely packed handwritten pages touching on Riot Grrrls, conformity, and self image. This is sure to piss somebody off, as the first-hand descriptions of teen-age sexual alienation are honest and self-conscious, but not quite "P.C." \$2. (TK)

### CHOCOLATE IMPULSE

#1 (P.O. Box 605, Freeburn, KY 41528) "Pot-smokin' cunt-lickin', lesbian Kentucky weekend" is the title of one piece in this 32-page zine, and it pretty much encapsulates the general feel of the deal. Faith and Valerie are girlfriends that live in some shit-hole town that they are trying desperately to raise enough money to escape before they're lynched or something. That's probably a genuine concern, as no doubt these gals stand out just a bit demographically. "Stink-Wrapped" with some brown stuff that I'm afraid to touch. \$1 and 2 stamps. (TK)

### CHOOSING CHOICE

unnumbered/Mar.'93 thru Jan.'94 (POB 190715, San Francisco, CA 94119) is an 8-page liberal-feminist newsletter with the tag line, "Plain talk every other month about abortion, politics and the Constitu-

tion," all from an at times excessively legalistic point of view—which is to be expected given that its publisher, Nancy Tompkins, is an attorney. The March issue includes an apologetic description of age of consent laws. The July issue covers the controversial FDA suppression of the RU 486 "abortion pill" and prospects for its early end. The November issue covers the subject of home abortions, including an enlightening personal account. Subscriptions are \$20/year.

### CHUCK MAGAZINE

#3 (POB 10122, Berkeley, CA 94709) is 20 pages of "carnosexuality and hortiphilia." Reviews, sex, food (Armour meets Libby in the "potted meat food product challenge"), etc. Some truly neat-o photos of some horny geek masturbating with an avocado along with a cool centerfold of a cute naked grrrl with pizza all over her. \$3 is what it will cost you, pervert. (TK)

### COMMON SENSE

Vol.22,#2 (Libertarian Information Service, Post Office Box 520191, Miami, FL 33152-0191) is "the Newsletter for libertarians and other friends of liberty," a twelve-page bulletin and contact sheet for libertarians. This issue contains a recounting of various attempts by libertarians to gain ballot access, alongside an article entitled "Medical Care: Is It a Right?" by Ted Harrison. Interesting reading, particularly for those unfamiliar with the libertarian "party line." A one year subscription is \$12, though I imagine they'd be willing to send a sample for a stamp. (TK)

### CROATAN EXPRESS

#2 (842 Folsom St., Box 235, San Francisco, CA. 94107) 28 pages. This is an excellent entry into zinedom, lots of potential here to turn into a meeting place for the Watsonian minds. Here you'll find a transcription of a lecture by Hakim Bey, a bit by Feral Faun, and a "Sermon from Exile" from Jake "Jerusalem Express" Rabinowitz. \$1, stamps or cash, trades encouraged. (TK)

### CROSS-TALK

#50 (POB 944, Woodland Hills, CA 91365) "The gender community's news and information monthly" is one of the premier zines of the transvestite/transsexual community. Here are 40 pages of gender news, ads, legal news, comics, beauty tips and advice. An excellent zine—one of those that could open whole new worlds for the reader. \$48 a year, though sample issues may be available. (TK)

### CRUSADE

#2/Dec.'93-Jan.'94 (Dave Grenier, 3202 N. Country Club, Apt. #28b, Tucson, AZ.

## REVIEWS Alternative Press Magazines

85716) is an unpaginated, photocopied zine featuring an interesting interview with Scott Beiben of Bloodlink Records on the ins and outs of independent recording and distribution within the punk scene, along with some generic liberal opinion pieces on the Brady Bill and gay rights. Send \$2 for a sample copy.

### CYBERTEK

#8 (OCL/Magnitude, POB 64, Brewster, NY 10509) I wish I understood more of this 18-page "cyberpunk technical journal"... schematics for various wiretaps and phreaking tools are way too specialized for me. Frequency finders, TV jammers, all kinds of cool stuff. This is truly putting technology to good use. Highly recommended if you've got the tech background and almost enough to make you try to acquire the tech background if, like me, you have none. Fascinating. \$15 for six issues. (TK)

### DAGGER

#16/Winter-Spring '93 (Tim Hinely, POB 7605, Santa Rosa, CA 95407) is a 28-page punk zine of the angry, yet sensitive, young man variety. This, the "Gone to California" issue, includes an interview with punk folkstress Lois Maffeo, and some (more amusing than average) zine, show and record reviews. \$3 will get you a copy. (TK)

### DEATH TO THE WORLD

#2 (824 Chestnut St, Chico, CA 95928) This 20-page zine, apparently put out by a punk rocker who has converted from that religion to Russian Orthodox Christianity, is wonderfully bizarre. It's one of those things that ended up charming me just because it took me so long to figure out what the hell it was. "Several punks have joined the Brotherhood...and are dying to the world as monastics, having found ancient Orthodox monasticism to be the ultimate punkdom." You won't see this every day. No price listed—I'd send a single. (TK)

### DIE EVAN DANDO, DIE

#1 (1464 Easton Road., Warrington, PA 18976) Sheer on genius. Punks declare full scale war on alternatie heartthrob, with hilarious results. "If you see Evan Dando in public, refer to him as Evan Dildo." Also included is a readers poll. "If you were granted one wish, what would it be? A. Evan Dando's mouth sewn shut in freak medical mishap; B. Evan Dando publicly picks fight with Kate Moss and loses; C. Evan Dando takes real-man lessons from Jack Lord." I imagine the fun's only beginning. Get in on the ground floor. \$1.50 post paid. (TK)

### DRAGAZINE

#6/undated (POB 691664, West Hollywood, CA 90069) is a glossy, frolicking 40-

page "Magazine for Halloweeners and Inbetweeners," providing news and views of drag queens, transvestites and others inhabiting the indeterminate gender range. This issue includes a hilarious piece on "J. Edgar (Mary) Hoover: We hardly knew ye" by Leigh de Santa Fe, and interviews with the well-known female impersonator Gypsy and the longtime publisher of *Transvestia*, Virginia Prince, along with photos galore. Sample copies are \$5.95; subscriptions are \$10.95/2 issues.

### DYSTOPINION

#16 (POB 45622, Seattle, WA) 8 pages of "Olympia-Seattle infonoise." A few ads, and some good "alternative-nation" bashing. You should be able to get this for a couple of stamps. (TK)

### EDITORIAL NETWORK NEWSLETTER

#4/Feb.'94 (Quadrige Publishing, 1613 Chelsea Road, Suite 311, San Marino, CA 91108) is a readable 8-page newsletter of advice, reviews and criticism relevant for magazine editors. This issue includes columns titled "Magazine watch" and "Computers and publishing," along with "A premature obituary" for Let's Live magazine (a long-running natural health magazine with a declining circulation). Subscriptions are \$12/year.

### EXTRA!

Vol.6,#7/Nov.-Dec.'93 (POB 911, Pearl River, NY 10965) is the 28-page bimonthly magazine of FAIR (Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting), a liberal national media watch group seeking "to correct bias and imbalance." This interesting issue includes Lani Guinier's "Challenge to journalists on racial dialogue," John Canham-Clyne on "October reprisals: Investigators of alleged Iran deal face smears, legal threats," and Matthew Jardine on the almost invisible attacks on "East Timor: Media turned their backs on genocide." Subscriptions are \$30/year.

### EYE MAGAZINE

#3/Winter '94 (EYE, POB 303, NY, NY 10009) is a 44-page new journal of the esoteric and bizarre...and despite the zine's few nods towards the whole NYC death-art thing, it definitely shows promise. Issue #3 features an excellent, yet mildly inaccurate article entitled "Methadone or heroin—Why does the government ban one and push the other?" and a strange piece on the German practice of using cadavers for crash test dummies. \$4 for a sample issue. (TK)

### FLATTER!

"Cults that matter" issue. (661 Shotwell St. San Francisco, CA 94110-2623) 32 hilarious pages packed with lascivious girl talk about Star Trek: The Next Generation, like "The



## REVIEWS Alternative Press Magazines

Riker Debate: Stud or Dud?" ("All the other women are happy with Number One, why can't you be?" "Number One? EWWW!!!!"), a couple of polls, a review of a Blue Oyster Cult show, a short bit titled "Aleister Crowley—Demon or Dumbass?" and other fun stuff. This is a must-have for Rollerderby fans. Well worth \$2 for an issue. (TK)

**FREE INQUIRY**  
Vol.13, #4/Fall '93 & Vol.14, #1/Winter '93-4 (Box 664, Buffalo, NY 14226-0664) is a professionally-produced 68-page quarterly magazine published by the Council for Democratic and Secular Humanism. With a straightforwardly rationalist and liberal orientation, there will be few surprises in store for readers. The Fall issue has for its theme: "Should Secular Humanists Celebrate the Rites of Passage?" The Winter issue covers a theme of "Miracle or Mirage?" critical of faith healing. It's also notable for an essay by editor Paul Kurtz titled "Are we approaching the end of the age of books?" (in which he laments both current trends in the publishing industry and new forms of information technology, both of which threaten to severely challenge the independent press), and for an interesting interview with Tai Solarin, one of Nigeria's "leading educators," who also happens to be a secular humanist! Subscriptions are \$25/year.

**GOOGLEBOX**  
#1 & #2 (Jennifer, 415 McBain, 545 W. 114, NY, NY) is a 36-page punk zine of the angry, yet sensitive, young woman variety. Issue #1 includes a long, rambling, "What I did on my summer vacation"-style description of the trials and tribulations to be encountered by a footloose young woman following, of all things, the Lollapalooza tour about from place to place. You'll also find short bits on publisher Jenn's move to NYC to attend school. Issue #2 is an improvement, with what is probably one of the best Fugazi interviews one could encounter in this format, and lots more on the editor's new home in NYC. Each issue will cost you a dollar. (TK)

**GREY CITY JOURNAL**  
#1/Oct.1, #2/Oct.8, #6/Nov.5, #9/Dec.3, #93 thru #11/Jan.7 '94 (Ida Noyes Hall, 1212 E. 59th St, Chicago, IL 60637) is a new 12 to 20-page university student-left tabloid from the heart of Milton Friedman country. Critical, well-written articles include J.W. Mason's "Don't know much about history: How did a second-rate scholar like Robert Fogel end up with a Nobel Prize?" in issue #6. Sample copies are \$1; subscriptions are \$10/10 issues.

**GUILLOTINE**  
Nov.'93 (c/o EMO, SUNY Binghamton, POB 6000, Binghamton, NY 13902) is the 12-page organ of the right-wing "libertarian" college-boys in Binghamton. I wonder who the libs are going to get to protect their sanctified "private property" once they "abolish government"? The ghost of Ayn Rand? If you're looking for answers to that question, you won't find them here. But seriously, folks, this isn't a bad effort for some guys who claim to know "economics" who are in college. They'll send you one if you send them a business-sized envelope with a 52-cent stamp on it. Remember, fifty-two, five-two, cents. (TK)

**HERE AND NOW**  
#14/1993 (c/o Transmission Gallery, 28 King Street, Glasgow G1 5QP, Scotland; or POB 109 Leeds, West Yorkshire LS5 3AA, England) is at long last another impressive 64-page issue of this "Magazine of Radical Ideas," featuring a number of interesting and useful articles from Karl Baxter's "What future for the rave," and Arch Stanton's "The political economy of Ecstasy" (the drug, that is), to Tom Jennings' "The hidden injuries of theory," and Douglas Spencer's "Redefining the radical: PC as media scare and translation." This journal, with its emphasis on the critique of managerialism, professionalism and bureaucratic ideologies, is almost always a refreshing change from the heavy-handed, and usually anachronistic, analyses of the PC left—including left-anarchists. It remains one of the more important magazines publishing in the radical milieu. Single copies are £1.20; subscriptions are £3/3 issues.

**IHIP MAMA**  
#1/Winter-Spring '94 (POB 9097, Oakland, CA 94613) is a new 24-page quarterly zine for "the incredible diversity of mothering and parenting experiences out there." This first issue includes many short articles ("so...you might be able to read the whole piece before being interrupted by whining or song"), including editor Ariel Gore's observations on gender conditioning in "The day pop culture moved in," and Susan Ito's speculations about her daughter's future sexual life in "Whose hand on her white, white belly?" Sample copies are \$3; subscriptions are \$10-\$20/year sliding scale.

**HOAX!**  
Vol.3, Monst. Issue (Aux, 64 Beechgrove, Aberhonddu, Powys, Cymru, U.K. LD3 9ET) 56 pages of hell-raising hoaxsterism and proud politically motivated pranking. The news clippings reprinted here alone make it worth snapping up. Jam-packed for hours of fun! with: "The

Art and Science of Billboard Improvement", a bit on Orson Welles' famous "War of the Worlds" broadcast, and some British urban legends (which, disappointingly enough, aren't much different from the American ones). Zine reviews and hate mail round this out. No price listed, I'd send them Five Yankee bones for their trouble. (TK)

**IDEOLOGICAL COMMENTARY**  
#60/May & #61/Aug.'93 (12 Bloomfield Rd., London N6 4ET, England) is a 24 to 28-page periodical pushing editor George Walford's bizarre ideology of Systematic Ideology. Subscriptions have increased to \$10/year (4 issues).

**IMMANENT FACE**  
#10 (POB 890, Allston, MA 02134) is 28 pages of fiction and poetry, informal articles and illustration. Stands out as much better than the average lit-zine. Samples at \$3. (TK)

**INDIE FILE**  
#23/August '93. (1711 Central Ave. Charlotte, NC 28205) is the free monthly of the Carolina's hoppin' music scene. 32 pages of interviews with local and touring luminaries, reviews and show announcements. \$1 for a single copy. (TK)

**INTERESTING**  
#1/undated (POB 1069, Bangor, ME 04402-1069) is a brand new 18-page zine dedicated to listing all the things the editor finds interesting, a miscellaneous collection of quotes, facts, observations, speculations and humor. Sample copies are \$3.

**INTERNAL CONFLICT**  
#5 (POB 51465, Raedene, 2124, Johannesburg, South Africa) Anarch-punkers from South Africa. "Call us politically correct, we don't care. In short we will try (to) remain true to anarchist ideals." Uh-huh. \$3 post paid air. (TK)

**IN THESE TIMES**  
Vol.17, #24/Oct.18-'93 thru Vol.18, #10/April 4-'93 (Institute for Public Affairs, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647) is a professionally-produced, fortnightly "alternative newsmagazine" in its 18th year of publishing! With a change from tabloid to magazine format last year, *ITT* looks better than ever, while it remains committed to providing an ongoing left-liberal perspective on major national and international news stories in a timely manner impossible for less frequent alternative periodicals to emulate. The Feb. 7 issue includes a collection of articles covering aspects of American poverty, along with Joel Bleifuss' examination of the latest continuation of the Iran-Contra scandal

cover-up, this time by the mainstream press in its highly skewed coverage of the publication of Lawrence Walsh's final report. The Feb. 21 issue is especially good, featuring a cover story by Noam Chomsky on "Time bombs: Why the new global economy will trigger more explosions like Chiapas," and an interesting analysis of the importance of "The hidden persuaders: The Business Roundtable, Washington's most powerful lobby" by John Judis. Subscriptions are \$34.95/year (26 issues), or \$18.95/6 months.

**ITCHIN' FOR INK**  
#4/Nov.'92 (POB 1121, New York, NY 10040-0814) is a down-to-earth 30-page tattoo magazine, featuring lots of interesting tattoo photos and personal accounts of getting "scarred for life." Samples are \$3; subscriptions are \$10/4 issues.

**I WANT TO BLOT OUT EVERYTHING I SEE WITH MY PUKE**  
#2 (Nebish, 3321 Spring Garden St. Philadelphia, PA 19104) 20 pages of caveats like "If I wasn't so afraid of you, I'd definitely kill you. Violence and humiliation arouse me. Whenever (by some bizarre stroke of fate) I do have sex, I think about violence and debasement." Hurry up and write this guy before you see him on the news for shooting up the local mall. 4 stamps to feel the pain. (TK)

**JACK RUBY SLIPPERS**  
#2/undated (1800 Market St #258, San Francisco, CA 94102) is a purposefully irregular 88-page magazine filled with a blend of fairly critical to semi-radical postmodern and cyberpunk themes whose overall destination isn't completely clear. With superb production, some interestingly bizarre graphics and a lot of heavy-handed—though usually readable—speculations, this magazine is certainly not destined for mass-circulation. But philosophically minded readers may be well rewarded for their patient textual digestion, beginning with Poli Peptide's short "Metaluminal luminosity" (a defense of difference, critique of virtual reality), proceeding with Philip Rothbaum's "Mything the sensorium: The pragmatics of information war" (a critique of category-logic taken as truth), detouring through a long interview with a "Corporate thief," before encountering several poetic/fictional/texts, and crashing back into "Towards an ontology of anti-structure" by Jonathan Bruce and "Mythinformation as information" by Lecram Neric. In sum, there's enough material presented here to trip out on all day. Samples are \$4; subscriptions are \$12/3 issues.

## REVIEWS Alternative Press Magazines

**JERSEY GREENS JOURNAL**  
Vol.2, #3 (POB 2029, Princeton, NJ 08543) "...is a quarterly publication containing news and commentary on the activities of the Greens and other progressive organizations in New Jersey." \$4 a year. (TK)

**THE K CHRONICLES**  
#2 (Big Bottom Comics, 32 Cabrillo St. San Francisco, CA. 94118) 10 pages of Keith Knight's excellent comic strips. Funny stuff, and he can draw, too. \$1.50. (TK)

**KICK IT OVER**  
#32/Fall '93 (POB 5811, Stn. A, Toronto, Ontario M5W 1P2, Canada) is the second issue of this 48-page magazine published by a new editorial collective. This issue, focusing on a theme of "Living in the City," includes an account of the (New Jersey) "North Camden Squats: Using squatting to build community" by Tom Knoche, an excerpt from Murray Bookchin's important *The Limits of the City* on "Libertarian municipalism," a fairly dismal account of the reformist political party "Ecology Montréal: Green city politics" by Phillip Chee, and a relentlessly reformist call for "Human ecology & community politics" by the London (England) Values and Vision group. Sample copies are \$3; subscriptions are \$9/year (4 issues).

**KOMOTION INTERNATIONAL**  
#6 (POB 410502, San Francisco, CA 94141) 60 pages from the Klub Komotion people, with cassette. Included this issue is a reprint of an interview with Freddie Baer reprinted from Britain's *GirlFrenzy*, a "Subtle Plague's Tour Diary in Europe" by Pat Ryan, and assorted other stuff. I can't even begin to review the tape here, like everything they do, it's eclectic as hell. A great product from a collective well worth supporting. \$20 for a membership/subscription. (TK)

**THE L.A. GANG BANG**  
#66 April, '94. (POB 7550, Burbank, CA. 91510) is the 6 page "newsletter of Gary, Lee, Mary and Valorie". Always a fun quick read, L.A.G.B. details these four peoples' outstanding experiences on a monthly basis. April's issue finds the four discussing April Fools pranks and celebrity deaths. \$9 a year, \$1 an issue. (TK)

**L.A.W.N.**  
Vol.2, #1/Feb.-Mar.'94 (Suite #422, 2490 Black Rock Turnpike, Fairfield, CT 06430) is an outspoken, often self-aggrandizing ("you saw it here first"-type rhetoric), 54-page pro-Republican Party zine. The publisher is especially proud of a piece titled "Who are the 'Fabians' and what have they got to do with Slick Willie?" Subscriptions are \$24/year; samples are \$5.

**THE MACHIAVELLIAN**  
Vol.94, #1 (POB 85, Salvisa, KY 40372) is a sometimes informative, occasionally amusing, often questionable unpaginated, spiral-bound newsletter of helpful hints for taking care of number one, the devil take the rest. This issue has a good opening piece on removing the magnetic strips from newer US currency, along with tips (some good, some of dubious worth) for breaking rules, avoiding laws and screwing people in various ways. The lowest point of this issue is a short article listing 16 helpful suggestions for "How to cheat on your wife and not get caught." Subscriptions are \$25/year.

**MEDIA AND VALUES**  
#63 (1962 S. Shenandoah St., Los Angeles, CA 90034) Partially funded by the Lawrence Welk Foundation (!), this is apparently the strokezine for the touchy-feely safety-nazi community of liberal types out there who want to censor you for your own good. Standout article is "20 ways to create a Caring Culture" (nonviolent line of video games, a violence "tax," etc. etc.). Just plain bizarre. Buy it or they'll kick your ass. \$5 a pop. (TK)

**MIDDLE EAST REPORT**  
#63/July-Aug.'93 thru #186/Jan.-Feb.'94 (1500 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20005) is the professionally produced, 34-page bimonthly magazine of the Middle East Research & Information Project, providing independent coverage of Middle Eastern events. Issue #183 focuses on Palestinian responses to the 1993 Oslo accord. The cover story for issue #184 is underreported subject of "Political Islam," including Gundrun Krämer on "Islamist notions of democracy" and Alexander Flores on "Secularism, integralism and political Islam." Issue #186 covers "Democrats and Despots: Political Change in Arabia." Subscriptions are \$25/year.

**MOON**  
Vol.4, #4/Nov.'93 thru #8/Mar.'94 (14 E. University Ave. #206, Gainesville, FL 32601) is a 36 to 40-page tabloid billed as "Gainesville's Free Newsmonthly." Every issue includes something of interest, and any city of comparable size would be lucky to have an alternative monthly like this. The November issue includes a short interview with Noam Chomsky on the subject of alternative media (in which he backs *Z Magazine* publisher Michael Albert's disturbing proposal for a centralized alternative press weekly for the U.S., integrating already existing papers). The March issue includes coverage of police harassment of local feminist activities. Subscriptions are \$15/year.



## REVIEWS Alternative Press Magazines

**THE MOORISH SCIENCE MONITOR**  
#7/April '93 (James Koehnline, POB 85777, Seattle, WA. 98145-1777) is an unpaginated zine chronicling the early histories and contemporary visions of the Moorish Orthodox Church and its prophet Noble Drew Ali. This issue includes a meditation on the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago (and its legacy), along with Hakim Bey's speculations about Moors in Ireland, and Neal Keating's inventive "A game for the nineties: ASE." Copies are \$4 while they last.

**NEXT PHASE**  
Vol.1,#9 & Vol.2,#3/undated (Phantom Press, 33 Court St., New Haven, CT 06511) is a 24 to 28-page literary zine that can be pleasant to read with a design that's also easy on the eyes. Sample copies are \$3; subscriptions are \$10/4 issues.

**NEW AGE PATRIOT**  
Vol.4,#4/Winter '94 (POB 419, Dearborn Heights, MI 48127-0419) is a 20-page newsletter focussing entirely on the struggle to legalize hemp. Sample copies are \$3.

**THE NEW CENSORSHIP**  
Vol.4,#10 & #11 (2953 Wyandot, Denver, CO 80211) is a 22-page "Monthly Journal of the Next Savage State." Each issue features poems by a different poet and art by a different artist. Seems as if it is loosely connected with the Naropa crew up in Boulder. \$5 a copy. (TK)

**NOT BORED**  
#22/Aug.'93 (POB 3421 Wayland Square, Providence, RI 02906) is a highly individual statement in the form of an 86-page, photocopied situationist-influenced zine—back after a year's absence. This issue includes the publisher's lengthy ruminations "On the trail of various and sundry legends of freedom" (searching for traces of the COBRA group in Copenhagen, visiting Marx's grave in London, delecting the posters in the Paris metro, experiencing the annual *Fasnacht* in Zürich, visiting the "Pynchon in Berlin" exhibit in a Berlin gallery, and impressions of St. Petersburg and Moscow), an analysis of German fascism under the title of "A Jew who chose to stay in Germany," a translation of a "Tract by Marcel Mariën," and a review of "A year in music," followed by a piece titled "Ice-T & the gang ceasefire." Always an engaging, often entertaining, read. No price listed; I'd send a couple bucks for a copy.

**NUTHOUSE**  
#9 (Twin Rivers Press, POB 119, Ellenton, FL 34222) is a 16-page humor magazine of short stories and obnoxious jokes. Issue #9 is the "Religion" issue, and includes "How I Became a Mail-Order Minister" and a short message from God. \$5/5 issues. (TK)

**THE OMEGA REPORT**  
Jan.'94 (The Phoenix Foundation, POB 92008, Nashville, TN 37209) 16 pages long and light years out. In this issue, Vladimir Zhirinovsky gives the Russian military the go-ahead for a mind control war against the U.S., and Clinton's new Sec. of Defense talks about captured UFOs. Standard conspiracy fare, but so standard it makes me wonder if it isn't produced by the Trilats or something to throw us off their trail. Great page of Zhirinovsky quotes. \$4 postage paid. (TK)

**OPEN EYE**  
#2/1993 (POB 3069, London SW9 8LU, England) is a promising 52-page magazine covering international politics from a liberal-left perspective. The second issue features Noam Chomsky on "World orders, old and new," a short piece on the still little-known details of "CIA drug-running, terrorism and the Clinton connection," an uninteresting interview with Labour M.P. Ken Livingstone, and former CIA agent Phil Agee's "Democratization" and the future of US power" (reprinted from *Cover Action*). Subscriptions are \$12/3 issues.

**THE OTHER 88%**  
#1 (223 Ave E. North, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, S71 1R6, Canada) is an interesting mini-comic, with 24 pages of dark introspection, mutant squirrels, and the like. The artwork is decidedly above average and intricate, which makes this a standout in the world of digest-sized xeroxed comics. \$1.50 will get you one. (TK)

**THE OTISIAN DIRECTORY**  
Spring/Summer '93 (Intergalactic House of Fruitcakes, 955 Mass. Ave. 3209, Cambridge, MA 02139-9183) is 42 pages of Discordian hell-raising and other silliness. Zine reviews, book reviews, some fiction, and some interesting Internet addresses round this out. \$2.50 a copy. (TK)

**OUT OF BOUNDS**  
#1/Winter '94 (POB 4809, Alexandria, VA 22303) is another brand new quarterly zine focussed on reprinting alternative press articles and reviewing music, zines and books. The 54-page premiere issue bears a bit of resemblance to *Alternative Press Review*, even including a reprinting of Tom Frank's "Twenty-nothing" rant (which appeared in *APR* #2), but there are definite differences as well, from the newsprint format and emphasis on shorter reprints to a preoccupation with punk music & culture (including interviews with Noise Culture & Vermin Scum, as well as pages of noise reviews). Sample copies are \$3 (checks to Tom Wheeler).

**OY MAGAZINE**  
#1/undated (Temple Ov Psychick Youth, POB 1455, London N4 1JT, England) is a 20-page zine in a highly unusual large format with a straightforwardly radical/"magickal" aim: "Explore daily your deepest desires, fantasies, motives, gradually focusing on what you would like to happen in a perfect world, a perfect situation, taking away all restrictions and practical considerations...Then decide to try and do it." It includes interviews with Academy 23 & Crash Worship bands, commentary on "The 'Men's Wisdom' movement," and satire on "The terrifying occult truth about football." The cover price is £1.50; I'd send \$3 or \$4 for a sample copy.

**PACIFIC TIES**  
Vol.16,#16 (308 Westwood Plaza, 210-D Kerckhoff Hall, Los Angeles, CA 90024) is "UCLA's Asian and Pacific Islander News-magazine," and at first glance it seems to more or less fit the mainstream multi-culti mold. But then—there's a piece here on "Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story," and an article on one of the world's greatest filmmakers, John Woo, and then a commentary from the editor-in-chief defending the paper's sense of humor against some folks out there who didn't get a joke. That was good enough for me. Pac Ties didn't bore me, at least. \$2.25 a copy. (TK)

**PEACE MAGAZINE**  
Vol.10,#1/Jan.'94 (736 Bathurst St., Toronto, Ontario M5S 2R4, Canada) is a 32-page bimonthly devoted to international analysis from a liberal/pacifist "civil society" perspective, featuring articles like Kourosh Farrokhsad's "The IMF: The International Manipulation Fund?" and "Ti Tanyen, Haiti's killing fields" by J.T. Wentges. Subscriptions are \$17.50/year.

**POOL DUST**  
#20 (POB 85664, Seattle, WA 98145-1664) is 36 pages of shredding Seattle-area skateboarding, mostly in abandoned swimming pools. Illustrated with many grainy black and white photos of skaters "getting rad air." Samples are \$1.50. (TK)

**PRACTICAL ANARCHY**  
#8/Nov.'93 (Chuck Munson, POB 173, Madison, WI. 53701-0173) is a 26-page zine now focussing on anarchist news, reviews and resources. This issue includes a section on "North American Anarchist News," including coverage of this year's gatherings, and a reprint of Boog Highberger's "What is money?" (from an old issue of *The Gentle Anarchist*). Send \$2 for a sample copy; subscriptions are \$7/4 issues.

**PROLOGUE**  
Vol.1,#4 (Committee for an Open Ar-

chives, POB 6008, Washington, DC 20005) The "Newsletter of the Committee for an Open Archives." These guys seem to think that the government would fall if the American people just knew the ugly truth about it all. The idea is, if only people knew how corrupt, larcenous, nepotistic, duplicitous and generally full of shit the American government is, it would collapse. I don't think so. So what if they are full of it. All I got to say is, "no duh." All the access to all the secret files in Washington isn't going to make a bit of difference. Secrecy isn't the problem, distraction is. *Prologue* does provide some good ideas of where to start hunting for forbidden information, if that's your forte, but so what if they killed Kennedy? I don't care and I'm not sorry about it. 12 pages. I'd send a stamp for a sample. (TK)

**PROUT JOURNAL**  
Vol.6,#2/undated (242 E. Main St. Suite 47, Ashland, OR 97520) is a 48-page magazine attempting to integrate "spiritual" and "material" concerns in a more serious manner than most other new age or religious currents. Highlights of this issue include Mark Friedman's "Outrageous wealth: The origin of our tolerance." The global gardener: An interview with Bill Mollison, founder of Permaculture, and an interview with Carl Anthony of Earth Island Institute titled "Eco-justice: The coming together of ecology & social justice." Subscriptions are \$25/year.

**PUBLIK ENEMA**  
#6 (25686 Nugget, El Toro, CA 92630) This 24-page newspaper anarcho-punk paper touches on the usual issues of concern: police repression of punks, prison injustice, and squatting, among other things. Number 6 also features an interview with Feral Faun. \$1. (TK)

**PUNCHLINE**  
#14/UNDATED (POB 460683, San Francisco, CA 94146) is a well-produced, graphically-oriented 40-page zine, this time with a feminist theme of "Read Our Lips," including a reprint on "Alternative abortion methods" (from *No Longer Silent*), as well as a lot of photos recaptured to make new points. No price listed.

**PUNCTURE**  
#29 (Box 14806, Portland, OR 97214) is a slick 148-page "magazine of music and the arts," covering stuff largely of interest to the college radio crowd, or the post-punk crowd, or some overused generalization like that. #29 has interviews with Scrawl, Holly Vincent, The Spinanes, etc. There's even an interview with pro-situ back/professional Baboon Dooley, Greil Marcus, and scads of hipster reviews. I just wish this

## REVIEWS Alternative Press Magazines

issue's Stercolab interview had been longer. Exceptional, but some of the reviewers need to take this shit less seriously—it's only rock and roll. \$3 for a fistful of it, daddy-o. (TK)

**RADICAL CHAINS**  
#4 (BM Radical Chains, London, WC1N 3XX, England) is a 44-page post-Stalinist, not quite post-Marxist discussion journal with a libertarian socialist/Trotskyist flavor. This deal is packed with essays discussing the working class and its problems in language the working class would never understand, but that's OK, these cats are specialists in "revolution," and speak their own language, like priests used to speak Latin. As far as this type of stuff goes, though, *Radical Chains* is by far more interesting than most. "The Leopard in the Twentieth Century—value, struggle and administration" is excellent fare, and I found the debate between Harry Cleaver and Hillel Ticktin on "Capitalism's present crisis" titillating as all get out. Good stuff, but be warned, there is garbage to sort through here, and you'd may as well not even try unless you have a good working knowledge of contemporary Marxist theory. \$4, all inclusive. (TK)

**R.A.G.E! FOR CHOICE**  
unnumbered/undated (c/o Emma Center, 3451 Bloomington Ave. S, Mpls, MN 55407) is an unpaginated anarchist feminist zine produced "for the occasion of kicking Operation Rescue's butt outta Mpls." The title is an acronym for "Resist, Agitate, Gyrate, Educate." It includes "Population control is *not* choice!" Ms. Abinni's "A complicated tirade on Christianity," a reprint of Estrogen X's "Not just for the rich and white!" (from *Madworld Survival Guide*), and a reprint of Peggy Kornegger's classic essay "Anarchism: The feminist connection" (from the *Quiet Rumours* anthology). Copies are available for \$2 + postage.

**RAVEN**  
#22/April & #23/July '93 (Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX, England) is a well-produced, 96-page quarterly journal published as a companion to *Freedom: Anarchist Fortnightly* listed below. The theme for issue #22 is "Crime" and includes Tony Gibson on "Delinquency then and now" (then referring to his article on the subject in 1963 published in the *London Journal Anarchy*), John Pilgrim on "Crime, delinquency and the state," Colin Ward on "Penal reform: The great British failure," and John Myhill on "Children abusing adults—Rule 43" (a critical look at the child sexual-abuse hysteria which has now reached Britain). Issue #23 includes articles covering aspects of "Spain: Under Franco and after," as well as Donna

Farmer's "Emma Goldman, A voice for women?" Subscriptions are £12/year.

**RAW POGO ON THE SCAFFOLD**  
#10 & #11/undated (2205 Walnut St. #3F, Philadelphia, PA 19103) is a 12-page photocopied punkzine covering the local scene. Nice touches include hand-colored photos on the covers, along with a sticker and a color-photocopied collage stapled inside #10. Unfortunately the small print inside makes the nearly illegible for those with less than excellent vision. Send \$1 for a sample copy.

**RECURRENT CYCLIST NEWS**  
#16/July-Aug.'93 (POB 58755, Renton, WA 98058) is a fairly specialized 22-page newsletter for enthusiasts of all types of (what else?) recurrent bicycles and tricycles. If cycling while you're sitting or lying back in comfort turns you on, this may be the publication for you! Subscriptions are \$22.95/year.

**THE REDNECK REVIEW OF LITERATURE**  
#24/Spring '93 (2919 N. Downer Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53211) is a hefty 122-page review full of fiction, poetry and essays. Starting off with an impressive essay on "Errors in logic: Un-systematic" views on god, language, magic, alienation and 'the Jesuit presence'" by Penelope Reedy, there is poetry galore, some readable fiction and pages of literate book reviews. Subscriptions are \$15/year.

**REVOLTING**  
#4 (POB 393, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey. KT2 5YR) A "revolutionary call to no harms and an end to all injustice," this zine runs news bites, reviews, and all that. There are a few recipes I may have to try some day, as well. 30 pages of it will cost you 2 bucks 'Merican. (TK)

**RSVP**  
#13/Sept. & #14/Oct.'93 (Tad Davies, 821 Highview Ave., Manhattan Beach, CA. 90266) is a 52-page "co-op publication of writers and a publisher concerned about freedom issues of many different views," with a fair number of anti-authoritarians involved. Issue #13 includes Bob Black on *Factsheet Five*, and a reprinted report on the Randy Weaver trial in Idaho (following the attack on his cabin by the feds). Issue #14 includes Lee Bonfield's "Whole in one, @ = doubt it, or schizophrenics unite!" Both issues include special sections of reprinted articles on the theme of "Kops as Killers." Subscriptions are \$16/year (8 issues + occasional bonus issues).

**RUFF KUTT**  
#1 & #2 (POB 451, Maple Falls, WA 98266) are both 60-page xeroxed collections



## REVIEWS Alternative Press Magazines

of various reprints. Both issues contain articles and updates on indigenous struggles, nuclear power, and similar stuff—put together in slapdash fashion. \$2 an issue. (TK)

### SCHISM

#9 (POB 75119, Richie Postal Outlet, Edmonton, Alberta, T6E 6K1, Canada) 28 pages in length, this is the bastard child of a mid-eighties punk zine by the same name. Schism reborn is the house organ of the Edmonton A.L.F., with related info, news, and reviews. Plus, a lot of intense photos of what certain biology and medical students are encouraged to do to unfortunate dogs and cats. \$2. (TK)

### SECOND GUESS

#9/Winter-Spring '94 (POB 9382, Reno, NV 89507) This is one of the better small punkzines floating around out there nowadays—and that's saying quite a bit. The editor, though, is self-righteous enough that it's obvious (despite his protestations) he's still a true believer in this "youth culture" crap. If he doesn't become too cynical (or a full-blown "dittohead") after getting crushed by the realization that his punk-rock way of looking at the world is pathetically narrow, not to mention just dumb, he may turn out to be an acerbic writer and an all-right, righteous brother. We'll have to wait. Inside this 64-page issue is a great article by Donny the Punk on his travels in the Newly Independent States (complete with a photo of him drinking the piss of Moscow punkers), an Artless mini-tour diary, and other stuff, y'know, reviews and stuff, dude, y'know? \$2 post paid. (TK)

### SEMILLERO

#1/Abril-Mayo '94 (POB 401205, San Francisco, CA 94140) is a new, professionally-produced 20-page bilingual news magazine covering Latin America and the U.S. The first bimonthly issue includes several pieces on the immediate effects of the Zapatista uprising in Mexico, along with David Bacon's coverage of "The Clinton immigration reforms—Bending before the anti-immigrant wind." Those who also read Spanish may be doubly impressed with the coverage provided by this new periodical for a community of growing importance. Subscriptions are \$30/year.

### SIC

#1/undated (c/o Folder 19, 30 Silver Street, Reading RG1, England) is a brand new "zine that intends to look at the everyday with a mind to change it." This first, promising issue includes articles on "Fast food: When you're hungry for fun!" "Thoughts on television," and "Giving the status quo." The cover price is 90 pence.

### SILVERWEB

#10/Fall-Winter '93 (Buzzcity Press, POB 38190, Tallahassee, FL 32315) is a 64-page literary "Magazine of the Surreal" featuring off-beat horror and science fiction in a very readable, attractive format. Sample copies are \$5.75; subscriptions are \$10/year.

### SLACK

Vol.2, #1/Nov.-Dec.'93 & #2/Jan.-Feb.'94 (Small Time Press, 1225 College #5, Boulder, CO 80302) is a very nicely produced 40-page bimonthly Boulder free-zine, but its contents include some decent writing of more than local interest. Issue #1 appropriately features an interview with filmmaker Richard Linklater. Issue #2 features a Jeff Stark's literate account of getting started in the zine world and producing the "community-zine" Stew in an article titled "The zine thing," along with a piece on "The young & the self employed" by Todd Prussman, Jeff Pruzan's light "The cars on Capitol Hill," and Julie Atomic's "Eastward Ho!" vacation log. Sample copies are \$2; subscriptions are \$12/year.

### SLINGSHOT

#49/Summer & #50/Fall '93 (700 Eshleman Hall, Berkeley, CA. 94720) is a 16-page anti-imperialist, anti-war, anti-authoritarian student tabloid for the UC-Berkeley area community. The Summer issue features cover stories on "Transgender rage against the psychiatric establishment" by Transgender Nation, and "SLAPP suits: Questions for the movement" by Michael Lee. The Fall issue includes cover stories on the San Francisco "Crackdown!" on Food Not Bombs and the homeless, and many short news pieces, mostly focussed on the S.F. Bay area. Send \$2 for a sample copy.

### SLUG & LETTUCE

#30/June '93 & #33/Feb.'94 (Christine, POB 2067, Peter Stuy. Stn., NYC, NY. 10009) is an 8-page contact tabloid providing free classifieds, along with punk gig photos and lots of zine & music reviews. Send an SASE or 2 IRCs for a copy.

### STEW

#6 (POB 2302, Boulder, CO. 80306) 44 pages of poetry, comic, y'know, the usual. \$1 and 2 stamps. (TK)

### TIDES

Vol.2 #1/Samhain-Yule '93 & #2/Imbolc-Spring '94 (POB 1445, Littleton, MA 01460-4445) is a 60-page quarterly "Journal of Wicca and NeoPagan Spirituality." These issues include several views on the recent Parliament of World's Religions. Subscriptions are \$13/year.

### TRAINITE TIMES

#2 (J.M., POB 9052, Berkeley, CA 94709) 36 pages of punky anarchism and classic marginal reprints. Some Last International flyers, "My Date With Holly Near," and some reprinted articles and detoured advertisements make this up, as well as some amusing personal anecdotes about conflict with arbitrary authority. A little hard to read. Samples should be \$2. (TK)

### TRANET

#84/Sept.'93 & #86/Jan.'94 (Box 567, Rangeley, ME 04970) is a 16-page bi-monthly networking zine full of information and contacts for "alternative and transformational movements." Subscriptions are included with membership at \$30/year.

### TRANSCENDENCE

#3 (Susan Stack, 3424 Shady Lane, Glenwood, MD. 21738) Movie, music, and zine reviews, 16 pages of them. Also some poetry and short fiction, ranting editorials, also. A zine's zine. \$3/4 issues, or trade. (TK)

### UNDER ONE SKY

#11 (2249 E. 21 St., Brooklyn, NY 11229) is the 36-page contact sheet of the Brooklyn rave crowd. "Dedicated to the dance scene that is joining hands across the globe." Reviews and opinions from said scene's heart—carrying well it's international flavor. \$20 a year. (TK)

### URBAN SPELUNKER

Vol.2, #3/Feb.'94 (6523 California Ave SW #323, Seattle, WA 98136-1822) is a 12-page monthly alternative community tabloid, billed as "Seattle's choice for free-thinking music, art and culture," and emphasizing humor and reviews. Subscriptions are \$18/year.

### VAR TUFFA

unnumbered/undated (POB 1344, Claremont, CA 91711-1344) is a bizarrely formatted 12 to 24-page tabloid of—very possibly—equally bizarre contents. Unfortunately, I didn't have time to try reading much, and since hints as to meanings or values were scarce, I can't really say what the possible intentions of the publisher(s) might be. If this non-description intrigues you, sample copies are \$1 (checks payable to Bill Batchelor).

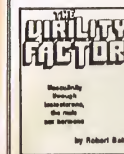
### WAPSIPINICON ALMANAC

#4 (Rt. 3 Press, Anamosa, IA 52205) 160 pages of fiction and historical essays—largely to do with Iowa and living in it—make up this handsome letterpress publication. Local gossip ("We'll always remember the magnificent mid-June square dance at writer Mary Swander's rural Kalona home") about what seem to be rural hippies/yuppies and artists also abounds. Published yearly at \$6.25 post paid. (TK)

## REVIEWS Alternative Press Magazines

### The Virility Factor by Robert Bahr

THE ONLY LAYMAN'S BOOK EVER ON THE MALE HORMONE



- How and when to enlarge under-developed genitals.
- What causes excess body fat and flabby breasts in men and how testosterone can eliminate the problem.
- Why some men have excess body hair while others have none.
- What makes some men aggressive, stress-resistant, physically strong, impressive, while others remain physically and emotionally frail.

"Bahr's informed and lucid book is a boon to the man who is troubled by the most common 'masculine' problems...well organized discussions of what testosterone is, how its normal supply activates a man's sexual activity and how a man's sexual drive, general health, appearance and psychology suffer when testosterone levels for whatever reason (stress is one) fall below the norm."

Publishers Weekly

### FACTOR PRESS

P.O. Box 8888 Dept. AP  
Mobile, AL 36689

### WICKED MYSTIC

#22/Oct.'93 (POB 3087, Astoria, NY 11103) is a thick, 100-page quarterly full of enough bits and pieces of horror, mayhem and perversion to sate most anyone's appetite for this genre. Along with lots of poetry and graphic illustrations, the best contributions here are the abundant short stories, including notably gory pieces like Charlee Jacob's "Raw Meat," Buzz Lovko's "Deidre," William Rose's "Interrogation," and Adam Perrone's "Just like Daddy." Sample copies are \$6.50; subscriptions are \$24/year (checks to Andre Scheluchin).

### WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF INSURANCE!

unnumbered/undated (POB 5184, Bethlehem, PA. 18015) is a hilarious 50-page one-shot zine, subtitled "Welcome to Corporate Hell," produced by an insurance industry temp worker bent on exposing the business, in this case the Firemen's Fund Insurance Company. This type of business disorientation manual should be mass-distributed in every industry! Send \$3 cash. And throw in two extra bucks for a copy of Temp Slave zine by the same publisher (to be reviewed in the next APR), while you're at it.

### WILD EARTH

Vol.3, #4/Winter '93-94 (POB 455, Richmond, VT 05477) is a 98-page quarterly magazine seriously dedicated to conservation biology and the preservation as well as extension of wilderness. Started and published by ex-Earth Firsters, including EFi founding member Dave Foreman, this journal provides a more academically respectable, less socially-committed counterpoint to Earth First! in its current configuration. This issue includes "A plea for political honesty" by John Davis, a focus on oft-overlooked "Endangered invertebrates and how to worry about them" by R.W. Flowers, and Dave Foreman on "The Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act and the evolving wilderness area model." Subscriptions are included with membership in the Cenozoic Society at \$25/year.

### WLW JOURNAL

Vol.16, #2/Summer '93 (c/o McFarland & Co., Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640) is a 32-page quarterly journal for women library workers which emphasizes book reviews, making a point to include books from alternative press. In fact, this issue includes

### Solo Sex: Advanced Techniques!

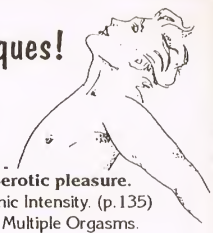
by Harold Litten

From medical journals, personal diaries, interviews and holy books from Europe and the Far East, the keys to advanced autoerotic pleasure.

- Greatly Heightened Orgasmic Intensity. (p. 135)
- Maintaining erection during Multiple Orgasms. (pp. 147-158)
- Experience of Altered Sexual States. (pp. 114-146)
- The Psychic Orgasm—A complete orgasm with erection, and ejaculation entirely through mental stimulation. (pp. 175-192)
- Manual Techniques, make-them-yourself devices. (pp. 39-76)
- Physical, Mental Health Through Ecstatic Self-Pleasuring.
- Detailed Instructions, Illustrations, 208 pages.

- ☐ Solo Sex: Advanced Techniques...\$ 16.95
  - ☐ The Virility Factor .....\$ 16.95
  - ☐ BOTH BOOKS (\$33.90 value).....\$ 27.50
- (all charges include postage & handling)

MC, VISA, call 1-800-304-0077



an article on this subject by editor Audrey Eaglen titled "Publishing for women." Subscriptions (by volume only) are \$24/year.

### XIZQUIL

#9/May, '93. (POB 285, Reserve, NM 87830) 62 pages of new-ageist drum-pounding. Fiction, poetry and a few non-fiction bits round this out. Sci-fi from a bio-centrist perspective. \$3.50 a single copy. (TK)

### XXX

#4/1993 (John F. Kelly, 82 Kimball Ave., Yonkers, NY 10704) is a 42-page deviant humor magazine that, while not the funniest thing on paper, does manage to provoke a few chuckles through its celebration of "that particular human anomaly, the genetic freak of nature, the so-called 'supercriminal,' the man with the extra Y chromosome." This cleverly crafted issue includes an amusing interview with Bud Adams (owner of the "world's largest manufacturer of practical jokes and magic tricks"), a description of "The Billy Graham Museum" by Paul Ryan, and loads of bizarre comic strips, from Carl Watson & Kevin Pyle's "My name is Eddy Paris" to P. Revess' "The story of Albert Fish." The cover price is \$3.50.



REVIEWS  
Alternative Press Books

# Gone to Croatan

Reviewed by John Zerzan

*Gone to Croatan: Origins of North American Dropout Culture* edited by Ron Sakolsky and James Koehnline (jointly published by Autonomedia, POB 568, Brooklyn, NY 11211, and AK Press, 22 Lutton Place, Edinburgh EH8 9PE, Scotland, 1993) 382pp. \$12.00 (+ \$2.00 p&h) paper.

Sakolsky and Koehnline have given us a fertile grab-bag, a suggestive pastiche of generally ignored cross-cultural round pegs that would not be fitted into the square holes of the dominant social orders. Very little in this collection actually deals with whites dropping out to join Native American tribes (e.g. the Croatans); the title is apparently not meant literally.

More compiled than edited, this collection encompasses many styles and topics of non-conformity and opposition, from the colonial period into the 1800s. The odyssey of the 10,000 Ishmaelites, an anti-industrial amalgam of ex-slaves, defeated Indians, and European work refusers is the subject of the first three contributions. Featured in James Fenimore Cooper's novel *The Prairie*, but long since forgotten, if not suppressed, their story is admirably evoked.

Four of the book's 25 entries are in the nature of short poems or brief invocations, and the first of these is Gail Tremblay's "Owning Difference." For me, the title phrase, which is repeated in the text bears connotations of both 12-step jargon and private property; nonetheless, her celebration of heterogeneity is powerfully rendered.

James Koehnline's "Legend of the Great Dismal Maroons," subtitled "A Secret History of 'The Other America,'" occupies twelve pages with this marvelous accompanying collages. This wide-ranging prose-poem encompasses much more than the eponymous middle-southern Atlantic coast refuge of multiracial outcasts and fugitives; it is a lyrical denunciation of the entire fabric of domination in the New World.

Another standout contribution is Peter Lamborn Wilson's "Caliban's Masque: Spiritual Anarchy and the Wild Man in Colonial America," which samples and conjures up some of the usually overlooked examples of early counter-Americana. Wilson reminds us of the Roanoke settlers who abandoned their toil for absentee overlords and joined the friendly Croatan tribe: "North America's very first colonists had decided to become *Wild Men*." He also sketches, with similar economy and verve, the story of Thomas

Morton of Merry Mount, Massachusetts, whose dropout crew scandalized the Puritans and provides continuing inspiration to pagans close to 400 years later. The tenuously-contained subversive energies of some of the antinomian (literally "against law") Christians, such as the Ranters and the Diggers, are brought to light, as with those of some of the obscure Masonic orders. It must be said, however, that in Wilson's zeal, he overstates the radical case for the latter; to assert, in summation, that "clearly Masonry cannot be excluded from the roll of revolutionary mystical sects" strikes me as more than a little doubtful.

**Gone to Croatan is, overall, a rich assortment of efforts to revivify the real riches of America's past. This is an important book, one much needed for succor and inspiration in desolate times.**

Other essays deal with such topics as early American communal experiments, the often volatile eighteenth century working classes, the culture or network of vagabonds and outlaws, regional insurrections against central power, and the Native American influence toward women's rights.

At times the variance in styles is much more pronounced than that of the subject matter. For example, the juxtaposition of Richard Kees' treatment of the Métis people, a large mixed-race grouping that endured for centuries mainly in what is now as French Canada, with Darren Wersher-Henry's account of those Métis, and their leader Louis Riel, largely in western Canada. Kees provides a very competent chronological narrative on a neglected topic in the longest entry in *Gone to Croatan*. Wersher-Henry, dealing with roughly the same sub-

ject, serves up a virtual parody of the latest bankrupt academic fashions. He employs most of the trendiest postmodern/post-structuralist buzzwords (e.g. the use of "liminal" or "liminality" seemingly several times per page) and pointless word-play clichés of deconstructionism. The 19th century Métis rebel, Louis Riel, becomes "Louis Riel," a "signifier," a "contested site," etc. Adding even less to our understanding of counter-cultural or anti-cultural history is the next selection, "Beneath the Tundra, the Permafrost," by J. Zinovich. This is another of the thankfully atypical, pomo entries in the collection, dealing with—I am essentially guessing here—some aspects of cultural geography in what is now Canada. Perhaps best to let some of "it" "speak" for itself:

By accepting an otherness, through silent conjectures and proffered associations, their [colonial] minds experiment with the extent of reality, groping always outwards, proliferating received images as the only possible order of perceptual space. Gradually, the spontaneously naive selves they were dissipate in concentric circles toward the interior. As systole and diastole they throb, inhaling geographies of Us and It.

A case of the newest of the emperor's new clothes, all the more embarrassing because this type of hot air purports to *expose* what is oppressive and false.

Gerald Vizenor seems to flirt with more of the same faddish non-sense. A paragraph early on in his "Manifest Manners: The Long Gaze of Christopher Columbus" reads:

"The long gaze fetishes," continued David Freeberg, "and so too, unequivocally, does the handling of the object that signifies us. All lingering over what is not body itself, or plain understanding, is the attempt to eroticize that which is not replete with meaning."

But Vizenor, a Chippewa as well as a professor, goes on to flesh out, in both anecdotal and eloquent fashion, his "manifest manners" notion; a superficial politeness toward non-whites is exquisitely flayed, and Marcuse's "repressive tolerance" comes to mind. Vizenor's article is a masterpiece of irony, a transmutation of an "Indian" way of humor into a simulation of academic prose.

Starting with James Koehnline's stunning, visionary cover collage, *Gone to Croatan* is, overall, a rich assortment of efforts to revivify the real riches of America's past. This is an important book, one much needed for succor and inspiration in desolate times.



# LEFT BANK DISTRIBUTION



## \* RADICAL BOOKS \*

LEFT BANK DISTRIBUTION is a not-for-profit project collectively owned & operated by its workers. We are the largest provider of anarchist & independent radical books in North America, with over 1200 titles from over 100 publishers.



4142 Brooklyn Avenue N.E.  
Seattle, WA 98105  
(206) 632-5870



To receive our free catalog featuring many hard-to-find radical titles please write to the address above. Donations of either \$1.00 or stamps to cover postage costs are always appreciated. VISA/MC phone orders accepted.

Freedom, Autonomedia, AK Books, Rebel Press, Loompanics, Lysander Spooner, III Publications, James Koehnline, Charles Kerr, Psychedelic Monographs & Essays, Pressure Drop, Common Courage, Open Media, Odonian, New Society, Lowry, Extreme Books, Annihilation, Version 90, AIM Press, ASP Publishers, BM Blob, BM Chronos, BM Combustion, BM Refract, Bratach Dubh, Profane Existence, Cienfuegos, Dark Star, Fantagraphics, Long River, Clash, Class War, Gauntlet, Libertarian Labor Review, Aporia, Madworld, No Longer Silent, Meschabe, the Match!, Echanges, Pre-Phoenix, Amador, Pirate Press, Solidarity, Spectacular k Ram, Bob James, Expanded Media Editions, C.A.L., Jack Sparrow, Black Heron, Black Swan, Bureau of Public Secrets, Cienfuegos, Commonground, Barbarian, Daughters, Don't Look Back, Class Comet, Rutgers, Routledge-Kegan & Paul, St Martin's, See Sharp, Processed World, Canotext(e), Zarnisdat Press, Geoff Hall, Harbour, New Star, Pulp, Ziesing, Amok, BM Hurricane, Club, Atlantis, Smile, Shadow, Social Anarchism Polygon, Petarade, Luath, Verso, Mirror, I.

## STAY HOME FROM WORK -- READ A BOOK

The Left Bank Collective comprises many projects including: Left Bank Books (new & used books), A.K.A. Books (used books), Books-to-Prisoners (free books to prisoners around the U.S.), & Left Bank Publishing. For more info, write to the address above.

